

A HISTORY

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PRELIMINARY NOTICE.

THE HISTORY OF THE PEACE was one of the literary projects of MR. CHARLES KNIGHT. It was based on the idea that, to many persons, particularly young persons entering upon the world, there was no period of English history at once so important, and about which it was so difficult to obtain information, as the immediately past age. The First Book, excepting the portion on the Spanish American Colonies, was MR. KNIGHT'S composition. Being unable to complete the Work with his own pen, he transferred it to MISS HARRIET MARTINEAU, whom he justly conceived to be well fitted for the task by her knowledge of political and social science, and her extensive acquaintance amongst the public men of her era. The result, it is scarcely necessary to say, fully justified MR. KNIGHT'S expectations, for certainly no such luminous memoir of the Thirty Years' Peace is likely to be written by any contemporary. It is proper, on account of the many references to time in the book, to add that the Author's stand-point was in the years 1846, 1847, and 1848.

In 1858 Miss Martineau gave the work a final revision. She then made a number of corrections, and substituted the Eighth Chapter of the First Book for the portion on the South American Colonies above referred to.

This is a reprint of that revised edition with the correction of some obvious errors.

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HISTORY OF THE PEACE.

BOOK I.

FROM THE SETTLEMENT OF EUROPE TO THE ACCESSION OF GEORGE IV.

CHAPTER I.

Peace of Paris—Holy Alliance—Congress of Vienna—Secret Treaty—Paris in the Autumn of 1815—Territorial Limits settled by Peace—State of Parties—Parliamentary Leaders—Lord Chancellor Eldon—Lord Liverpool and his Colleagues—The Opposition—Lord Castlereagh and his Colleagues—The Opposition—Fourth Session of Fifth Parliament.

THE world was at peace.

On the 20th of November 1815, Viscount Castlereagh and the Duke of Wellington, on the part of the King of Great Britain and Ireland, for himself and his allies; and the Duke of Richelieu, on the part of the King of France and Navarre, put their signatures to the definitive treaty between France and the Allied Powers. That treaty was for the 'object of restoring between France and her neighbours those relations of reciprocal confidence and good-will which the fatal effects of the Revolution and of the system of conquest had for so long a time disturbed.' At the moment of signing this pledge of peace, the Duke of Richelieu described it as 'a fatal treaty.' 'More dead than alive,' he writes on the 21st November, 'I yesterday put my name to this fatal treaty.' It was fatal in his view, because it contained 'an arrangement framed to secure to the allies proper indemnities for the past, and solid guarantees for the future.' To France

said, named his successor. The ministers of England did all that remained to them to do. The treaty of alliance, which accompanied the Treaty of Paris, was forwarded to the French minister with a note which contained sundry excellent lessons on the duty of uniting moderation with firmness, and rejecting imprudent or impassioned counsels. 'Indemnities for the past' were to be secured by France paying, by gradual instalments, seven hundred millions of francs—a sum not equal to the loan which the English chancellor of the exchequer raised in one day; 'guarantees for the future' were exacted by the presence of the army of occupation for a term of years, supported at the expense of France, and garrisoning her strong places, under the command of the Duke of Wellington. England, having lost her real influence in the government of France, retained the power of making herself odious. The terms granted to the French were in truth moderate. England, at the height of glory, had to pay penalties of longer duration, perhaps of greater severity, as the price of this tremendous conflict. The last three years of war alone had cost the country one hundred and ninety-seven millions.

Paris in the autumn of 1815 presented a scene even more remarkable than the Vienna of the preceding year. The conquered city was one universal theatre of gaiety and excitement. Here was no 'Rachel weeping for her children.' In some dark *estaminet* might a solitary soldier of the disbanded army of the Loire be heard execrating the presence of the foreigner. But the foreigner preserved an exact discipline. He paid for everything, and he had ample means of payment. 'It is from this year, 1815, that the greater part of the shopkeeping fortunes of Paris are to be dated. The haughty nobles of Russia lavished their rents upon Parisian mistresses and gamblers. Hundreds of the great English families rushed to Paris to gaze upon the conquering armies, and to contend for the honour of a smile from Lady Castlereagh in her evening circle, or a bow from the great duke at his morning levee. All this was to end. The ministers and serf-lords of Russia had to return to a St. Petersburg winter, and see how best they could persuade the Poles

that their annexation was the triumph of their independence. The cautious diplomatists of Austria had to discover how the hot Italian spirits that had dreamt of liberty and national greatness were to sit down under the leaden sceptre of the German stranger. Prussian councillors of state had to meet the excited landwehr, who had rushed to arms under the promise of constitutional liberty; and to accommodate the differences of one set of subjects with the old German laws, and her new Rhine people with the French code. The smaller German states had to re-arrange themselves under the confederation. Sweden had to reconcile Norway. Holland had to amalgamate with Belgium—Protestant with Catholic, and interpret Dutch laws to a French race. Spain, which had put down the cortes, had to try if proscriptions could satisfy a people that had been fighting seven years in the name of freedom. Certainly these home prospects were not so agreeable to the managers of national affairs as the reviews of the Bois de Boulogne, or the réunions of the Faubourg St. Honoré. Perhaps to the English ministers, and to their admiring followers, there was less of apprehension than to the leaders of those states who had gained something more solid than the glory with which England remained contented. It was enough for her to believe that she had won security. She had proudly won the semblance of it; the one great enemy was overthrown. Still there might be some feeling—half fear, half disgust—at the thought of the House of Commons, with its searching questions, its hatred of continental alliances, its denunciations of broken promises, coming from a small but active minority. The lofty port and the cold politeness that befitted the table of Congress would be there out of place. Two years of negotiation in the midst of victory would not be favourable to debating equanimity. Hard everyday business would have to be talked of instead of glory. There was but one course :

They must either—

For so run the conditions—leave those remnants
Of fool, and feather, that they got in France,
With all their honourable points of ignorance,
And understand again like honest men,
Or pack to their old playfellows.

—SHAKESPEARE: *Henry VIII.*

of 'the strange partiality which has lately indicated it for him among some of those who profess to be lovers of liberty in this country;' and ridiculed 'the sort of hankering after him which we can trace among some of our good Whigs.' The people had as little respect for those who grieved that France had to pay severe penalties for her long career of spoliation. The success of England was too recent—the success was too splendid and overwhelming, not to throw its shield over just fears and reasonable complaints. It annihilated mere party hostility. The reaction was not yet come. The fever-fit triumph had not yet been followed by the cold torpor of exhaustion. For a little while the nation could bear even the presumption of those who claimed all the merit of the triumph, and almost appeared to forget that never was a government so supported by the people as the English supported their government during the Hundred Days. Mr. Ward, a general follower of the administration, writes thus of the men in power in 1816: 'Their prodigious success—which, without at all meaning to deny their merits and abilities, must be allowed by all reasonable men to have been vastly beyond their merits and beyond their abilities—had made their underlings insolent, and the House too obedient.' Such was the position of the two parties with reference to external politics. Domestic concerns, which were soon to assume the greater importance, were too little regarded during the war to divide men into parties. The policy of peace had slowly to construct the great modern division of the adherents to things as they were, and the advocates of things as they should be—the enemies and the friends of progress.

Let us endeavour, with however feeble a pencil, to trace the outlines of those who had chiefly to interpret the opinions of their time—to attack and to defend—to propound lasting truths or fleeting paradoxes—in the parliament of 1816. The greater number of those who had to debate on the Peace of Paris sleep with those who had to debate on the Peace of Utrecht. The same narrow house that contained Oxford and Bolingbroke contains Liverpool and Castlereagh. Ponsonby and Tierney are as insensible to the historic regards of their younger contemporaries as

are Stanhope and Hanmer. The living and the dead alike claim an honest and impartial estimation.

On the woolsack sits John Scott, Lord Eldon. The chancellor is in his sixty-fifth year. He has filled his high office, with the exception of a single year of absence from power, since 1801. The consummate judge is in him united with the narrowest politician. The acute lawyer, balancing every question with the most inflexible honesty and the clearest vision, is the most one-sided and halting statesman that ever sat in the councils of an empire in which truth was only to be established by conflict, and every element of change was in ceaseless, and for the most part healthful activity. His thought by day, his dream by night, is to uphold what he calls the constitution—that indefinable compound of principles and expedients, that to him is as sacred as the commands of Holy Writ. Whoever approaches to lay his hands on that ark, whether he come to blot out a cruel statute, or to mitigate a commercial restriction, or to disfranchise a corrupt borough, or to break down a religious disability, is his enemy. He was the last great man who belonged to this sect. But he acted with perfect honesty and unshrinking courage in the assertion of these opinions. He retained office because he professed the opinions; but no one can believe that he professed the opinions to retain office. He lived in times when bursts of popular violence alarmed the peaceful, and licentious expressions of opinion disgusted the moderate; and he knew no other instrument but force for producing internal peace. Yet he was no hater of liberty, no assertor of the rights of unconditional power. The law, as it stood, was his palladium, yet no one was more ready to make the natural course of justice give place to suspensions of the constitution. But in his mind this was to preserve the constitution. To lop off a limb was life to the constitution; to infuse new blood was death. It has been truly observed that he confounded every abuse that surrounded the throne, or grew up within the precincts of the altar, with the institutions themselves—‘alike the determined enemy of all who would either invade the institution or extirpate the abuse.’ He is one that after-times will not venerate; but, fortunately for the fame of the larger number of the

of the slave-trade. Victory abroad is to them defeat, if it bring not the consummation of their hopes in the acts of foreign governments. At the peace of 1814, France—the restored government of France—restored by our money and our arms—refused to consent to the immediate abolition. Bonaparte, amidst his memorable acts of the Hundred Days, abolished the hateful traffic, by a stroke of his pen—and it was abolished. The Bourbon government a second time restored, dared no longer refuse this one demand of Great Britain. Had they refused, the British minister could scarcely have met the parliament. He is now come to say that France has decreed that there shall be an end to this sin and shame. Other nations have promised. But—is it to be told that where we might have commanded, there alone is resistance? Spain and Portugal still maintain the traffic. The firm band of abolitionists are secure that their silver-tongued leader—he who resigned every meaner ambition to give freedom to the oppressed—will persevere through good report and evil report, with or without friends in power, till the chains of the negro are broken for ever. They fear not enemies, they truckle not for friends; they have a support above what the world can give. This ‘band of brothers’—reviled or honoured, proselytising or solitary—will hold their ground. They are the only united body of enthusiasts in an age of political calculation. They will manifest, as they have manifested, what enthusiasm may accomplish.

CHAPTER II.

Speech—Property-Tax—Civil List—Marriage of the Princess Charlotte.

THE House of Commons of 1816 presented a remarkable spectacle. The ministry met the representatives of the people with all the pride and confidence of a triumph beyond hope. The ministerial leader came flushed from his labours of restoration and partition, and took his seat amidst shouts such as saluted Cæsar when he went up to the Capitol. The march to Paris, twice over, says a conspicuous actor in the politics of that hour, was sufficiently marvellous; 'but it appeared, if possible, still more incredible, that we should witness Lord Castlereagh entering the House of Commons, and resuming, amidst universal shouts of applause, the seat which he had quitted for a season to attend as a chief actor in the arrangement of continental territory.' The opposition, considered numerically, were a broken and feeble body; but, intellectually and morally, their strength was far more formidable in this the fourth session of the parliament than at any previous period of its duration. In opposing the enormous war expenditure from 1812—in resisting the determination to make no peace with Napoleon—they had not with them the national sympathy. The tables were turned. They had now to contend against the evident partiality for continental alliances—the enormous standing army—the excessive peace-expenditure—the desire to perpetuate war-taxes. They were supported by public opinion, for the once accredited indivisibility of peace and plenty appeared to be wholly at an end. The people were suffering, and the excitement of the struggle against the domination of France having passed away, they were not disposed to suffer in silence.

The speech from the throne, delivered by commissioners, was necessarily a speech of congratulation. Splendid

both became hurtful to the government in the House, and more hurtful still in the country. They were forced into discussion therefore; and then began a scene of unexampled interest, which lasted until the second reading of the bill. Each night, at a little after four, commenced the series of debates, which lasted until past midnight. These were of infinite variety. Arguments urged by different speakers; instances of oppression and hardship recounted; anecdotes of local suffering and personal inconvenience; accounts of the remarkable passages at different meetings; personal altercations interspersed with more general matter—all filled up the measure of the night's bill of fare; and all were so blended and so variegated, that no one ever perceived any hour thus spent to pass tediously away. Those not immediately concerned—peers, or persons belonging to neither House—flocked to the spectacle which each day presented. The interest excited out of doors kept pace with that of the spectators; and those who carried on these active operations showed a vigour and constancy of purpose, an unwearied readiness for the combat, which astonished while it animated all beholders. It is recounted of this remarkable struggle, that one night towards the latter end of the period in question, when, at a late hour, the House having been in debate from four o'clock, one speaker had resumed his seat, the whole members sitting upon one entire bench rose at once and addressed the chair—a testimony of unabated spirit and unquenchable animation, which drew forth the loudest cheers from all sides of the House.

‘At length came the 17th of March, the day appointed for the division; but it was soon found that this had been, with the debate, wholly anticipated. The usual number of petitions, and even more, were poured thickly in during some hours; little or no debating took place upon them; unusual anxiety for the result of such long-continued labour, and such lengthened excitement, kept all silent and in suspense; when, about eleven o'clock, Sir William Curtis, representing the city of London, proceeded up the House, bearing in his arms the petition, which he presented without any remark, of the great meeting of the bankers and merchants, holden in

the Egyptian Hall, and signed by twelve thousand persons.* The division took place after a debate that did not last half an hour; no one could indeed be heard in an assembly so impatient for the decision; and by a majority of thirty-seven voices the tax was defeated for ever, and the wholesome principle, as Mr. Wilberforce well observed, was laid down, that war and income-tax are wedded together.'

The ministers did not expect this defeat. They had calculated on a majority of forty. The opposition expected to lose by twenty. It was not a *party* triumph. The national feeling was irresistible. Even members of the Tory party assisted at and rejoiced in the issue. Mr. Ward writes from Paris: 'It was amusing enough to see the effect the defeat of our ministry upon the question of the income-tax produced upon the minds of the people here. Most of them thought that the government would be changed, and that the Whigs would come in, and probably let loose Napoleon to disturb the world for the third time. If I had been in the House, I should have voted in the minority, and yet, I confess, I am not sorry it was a minority. Not that I am by any means convinced that the income-tax ought to have been repealed, but because I think the ministry wanted beating upon something, no great matter what.' Mr. Ward rejoiced because he sighed for the return of his friend Canning to office. But the people exulted in the abolition of the property-tax upon no such narrow ground. They were suffering; and they saw no more effectual way to relieve their sufferings, than to remove the means of prodigal expenditure. There can be no doubt that the landed interest, of whatever party, were amongst the principal instruments in removing this burthen from the land, which they declared could then pay no rent. Whether the decision was a permanently wise one, may now be doubted. It was salutary at the time, for it dispelled the belief that resistance to taxation

* This is a mistake. Sir William Curtis spoke with great emphasis: "He was present in the House when the tax was first proposed, and he heard Mr. Pitt declare that it should be a war-tax only, and should positively cease on the restoration of peace. The division did not take place till the 18th.—K.

CHAPTER III.

Agriculture—Manufactures and Commerce—Depression of Industry—
Currency.

WHEN the government, in the name of the prince-regent, informed parliament that 'the manufactures, commerce, and revenue of the United Kingdom were in a flourishing condition,' the exception of agriculture was a sufficient announcement that the cry of 'distress' was near at hand.

The history of 'agricultural distress' is the history of agricultural abundance. Whenever Providence, through the blessing of genial seasons, fills the nation's stores with plenteousness, then, and then only, has the cry of ruin to the cultivator been proclaimed as the one great evil for legislation to redress. It was ever so. Pepys, in his diary of January 1667-8 writes: 'Here they did talk much of the present cheapness of corn, even to a miracle; so as their farmers can pay no rent, but do fling up their lands.' There had been a cycle of scarcity from 1658 to 1664, during which seven years the average price of wheat was about 57s. a quarter. There was a cycle of plenty from 1665 to 1671, during which seven years the average price of wheat was about 36s. per quarter. The obvious remedy for this excess in the disposable produce of one country, was to export the corn to other countries which had not been equally impoverished by abundance. Pepys, a shrewd man of business, saw the remedy: Farmers can pay no rent, but do fling up their lands, and would pay in corn; but our gentry are grown so ignorant in everything of good husbandry, that they know not how to bestow this corn; which, did they understand but a little trade, they would be able to join together and know what markets there are abroad, and send it thither, and thereby ease their tenants, and be able to pay themselves. But the natural law of commercial intercourse—the law by which the bounty of the All-giver would be distributed

amongst his universal family, so as to compensate for the inequalities of soil and climate—this law was despised as long ago as the time of Charles II. by the conventional law-makers, who were 'grown so ignorant in everything of good husbandry,' and did not understand even a 'little trade.' To remedy the evil of cheapness, they made the famous corn-law of 1670, which imposed duties on the importation of grain, amounting to prohibition. The restrictions upon exportation were removed; wheat might be exported upon the payment of a shilling per quarter customs-duty. But importation was not to be free till the price of wheat had reached 80s. per quarter. When it was at 53s. 4d., a duty of 16s. was to be paid; when above that price and under the mysterious compensation price of 80s., a duty of 8s. was to be paid. The more famous corn-law of 1815 was but a copy of the corn-law of 1670. Amidst the best and the worst species of opposition—the power of argument and the weakness of tumult—a bill was in 1815 hurried through parliament, which absolutely closed the ports till the price of wheat rose to 80s. After the passing of the corn-law of 1670 there was as much 'agricultural distress' as before, till dearth came to the relief of the suffering cultivator. Farms were thrown up, rents were reduced. In 1673, in spite of the prohibitory laws against importation, and the unlimited freedom of exportation, wheat was as low as 35s. In 1674 there came the landlord's blessing of a bad harvest, and the price of wheat rose to 64s. The cycle of scarcity had come round. It was precisely the same after the corn-law of 1815. It was passed during a season of wonderful abundance. It produced the immediate good to the landed interest of preventing the abundant supply being increased by importation; but the effect which it produced to the nation was to dry up the resources in years of scarcity which the foresight of other countries might have provided. The war-and-famine price of 1812 was again reached in the latter part of 1816, in 1817, and 1818. The golden days of the deity that is found in no mythology—the anti-Ceres—were returned. But the people were starving. Misery and insurrection filled the land.

their united pressure continued to make most rapid advances.' But the chief cause, as most correctly stated by Mr. Western, was 'a redundant supply in the markets, a supply considerably beyond the demand, and that created chiefly by the produce of our own agriculture.' With equal correctness did the speaker add: 'It is perfectly well known that if there is a small deficiency of supply, the price will rise in a ratio far beyond any proportion of such deficiency: the effect, indeed, is almost incalculable; so likewise in a surplus of supply beyond demand, the price will fall in a ratio exceeding almost tenfold the amount of such surplus.' And yet, with this knowledge of general principles, the same speaker asserts that in the period when 'agriculture was in a flourishing and prosperous state,' the profits of agriculture were not large. Let us endeavour to elucidate his position, that 'if there is a small deficiency of supply, the price will rise in a ratio far beyond any proportion of such deficiency.' More than a century ago it had been computed that but one-tenth of the defect in the harvest may raise the price three-tenths, and two-tenths deficiency raise the price eight-tenths. This was the opinion of D'Avenant and Gregory King. Mr. Tooke, in quoting this passage, says: 'There is some ground for supposing that the estimate is not very wide of the truth, from observation of the repeated occurrence of the fact, that the price of corn in this country has risen from 100 to 200 per cent. and upwards, when the utmost computed deficiency of the crops has not been more than between one-sixth and one-third below an average, and when that deficiency has been relieved by foreign supplies.' Upon this principle we may estimate the value of Mr. Western's assertion that, during the flourishing years to which he refers, the profits of agriculture had not been large. If the produce of an acre of wheat in good years be thirty-three bushels, sold for 6s. a bushel, the amount realised would be £9 18s. If the produce in an unfavourable season were diminished one-sixth, and the price raised from 6s. to 12s., the 27½ bushels would produce £16 10s. The difference is profit. At the commencement of the war, in 1793, the average price of wheat was 49s. 6d. a quarter; in 1794, it was 54s.; in 1795 and 1796, years of

scarcity, it was above 80s.; in 1797 and 1798, it fell again to the prices of 1794. The harvests of 1799 and 1800 were fearful visitations of scarcity. At Michaelmas 1799, the quarter of wheat sold for 92s.; and at Michaelmas 1800, for 128s. The winter of 1800-1 was the season of the greatest privation that had been experienced in this country since the days when famine was a common occurrence; before the harvest of 1801 the quarter of wheat had risen to 177s., and the quartern loaf had reached the fearful price of 2s. within a halfpenny. From 1802 to 1807 were years of abundance; but the price of wheat never went down to that of the years preceding 1800. During these six years the lowest average price of any one year was 60s.; the average price of the six years was 75s. But the six years from 1808 to 1813 were years of deficient produce; the price of wheat during that period went up, according to the principle of Gregory King and of Mr. Western. The price before the harvest of 1808 was 74s. 6d. the quarter; at the same period in 1809, it was 100s.; in 1810, 120s.; in 1811, 104s.; in 1812, 136s.; in 1813, 136s. The average price of the six years, 108s.; an excess of 33s. above the average price of the six years from 1802 to 1807. In 1810 the foreign supply was very considerable: but for that supply scarcity would have become famine. In 1811 and 1812 there was a virtual exclusion of foreign supply. For four of these years of high prices out of the six, the agricultural interest had the exclusive advantage of the rise of price, far advanced above the degree of defect. That was the period, within the recollection of many of us, when every acre of land was eagerly bought up; when the enclosure of wastes went on to an excess that had very slight regard to the quality of the land enclosed; when the cultivation of wheat was forced to an extent that had no reference to the exhaustion of the soil, or the necessities of economical husbandry; when rents were raised twofold, and often threefold, above the rents of 1792; when the race of small careful farmers vanished from the earth, and gave place to a legion of the most luxurious and insolent of all the class of getters of sudden wealth; when the whole business of cultivation was an affair of grasping ignorance

in the Indian paradise, which diffuses in fertilising streams the vapours which it was created to collect and condense for the purpose of more beneficially returning and distributing them.' According to this logical imagery, or imaginative logic, the capital of a nation in the pockets of its proprietors is 'vapour;' it becomes a 'fertilising stream' when it condenses into taxes. It assumes that there is more demand when the capital of a country is expended by government, than when the same capital is expended by individuals. It assumes that the expenditure of capital by government, in subsidies, in the wasteful consumption of armies, in all the wear and tear of war, is more profitable than the expenditure of capital in the general objects of industry which create more capital. It assumes that the partial expenditure of capital by government in its victualling offices, is more profitable than the regular expenditure of the same capital left in the pockets of the tax-payers, to give them an additional command over the comforts and elegances of life. One who saw through a fallacy as clearly as any person, and had no respect for the mincing phrases of the worshippers of power—William Cobbett—says of such dreams of the advantage of government expenditure: 'To hear this talk, one would suppose that government was a very rich and generous thing, having an immense estate of its own, instead of being what it is—the collector of enormous sums drawn away from the people at large.' This fallacy, as well as many others connected with the depression of industry at the close of the war, has been disproved by the long experience of peace. We now know that consumption has increased at a more rapid rate than at any period during the quarter of a century of wild profusion; that the agricultural and manufacturing production of the country has increased in the same proportion; that the real property of the nation has received the like increase; that the increase of population has been more than commensurate. We had arrived in 1816 at the highest point of war exhaustion. The peace came as the slow but sure corrective. Had the war been prolonged another three years, upon the same scale as the expenditure of 1813-14-15—had one hundred and ninety-seven millions more been thrown away of the capital of

the nation—it may be doubted whether sixty years of peace, instead of thirty, would have repaired the consequences of such an unnatural exhaustion.

Although the time is not arrived for presenting any details connected with the resumption of cash-payments by the Bank of England, it is necessary that we should very briefly notice the opinion which so generally obtained in 1816, that the depreciation of the currency during the war, and the practical return to a real standard at the period of peace, was a main if not the sole cause of the distress and embarrassment which we have described. Cobbett, in his strong and exaggerated style, puts the argument thus: ‘From this time [1797] there has been little besides paper-money. This became plenty, and, of course, wages and corn and everything became high in price. But, when the peace came, it was necessary to reduce the quantity of paper-money; because, when we came to have intercourse with foreign nations, it would never do to sell a one-pound note at Calais, as was the case, for about thirteen shillings. The Bank and the government had it in their power to lessen the quantity of paper. Down came prices in a little while; and if the debt and taxes had come down too, in the same degree, there would have been no material injury; but they did not. Taxes have continued the same. Hence our ruin, the complete ruin of the great mass of farmers, and tradesmen, and small landlords; and hence the misery of the people.’ This was published in November 1816. The theory might be right, that the reduced amount of the currency was the main cause of the depression of prices, if the facts were here correctly stated. But the Bank of England at the peace scarcely contracted its issues at all. In August 1813, the circulation of bank-notes was nearly twenty-five millions; at the same season in 1814, it was twenty-eight millions; in 1815, twenty-seven millions; in 1816, only half a million less. The utmost amount of the depreciation of bank-notes was in 1814, when a hundred pounds of paper would only buy £74 17s. 6d. of gold—a depreciation of about 25 per cent. In 1815 and 1816 a hundred pounds of paper would buy £83 5s. 9d. of gold—a depreciation of nearly 17 per cent. Thus the rise in the

value of money which Cobbett, and many others of less violent politics, declared had produced the wide-spreading ruin of 1816, by causing a proportionate fall of the prices of commodities exchanged for money, was not more than 8 per cent., as compared with the period when the value of an unconvertible paper-money was at the lowest. It is no less true that a vast amount of paper-money was withdrawn from circulation at this period, by the failure of many country-banks, and the contraction of their advances by all who were stable. This was a consequence of the great fall of agricultural produce—a consequence of the diminished credit of the producers. When the restriction upon cash-payments by the Bank of England was, in 1816, agreed to be renewed for two years, the bearing of the continuance of the restriction upon the state of prices was not overlooked. An extract from Mr. Horner's speech on the 1st May 1816, on his motion for a committee to inquire into the expediency of restoring the cash-payments of the Bank of England, will supply all that is necessary at this point of our history for the elucidation of this complicated subject: 'He would ask the House, had they felt no evils from the long suspension of cash-payments? Were they sensible of no evils, after all that had passed in the course of the discussions of the agricultural distress, during which no one had been hardy enough to deny that a great evil had arisen from the sudden destruction of the artificial prices? Would any man say that there had not been a great change in the value of money? What this was owing to, might be disputed; but, for his own part, he had not the least doubt. From inquiries which he had made, and from the accounts on the table, he was convinced that a greater and more sudden reduction of the circulating medium had never taken place in any country, than had taken place since the peace in this country, with the exception of those reductions which had happened in France after the Mississippi scheme, and after the destruction of the assignats. He should not go into the question how this reduction had been effected, though it was a very curious one, and abounded in illustrations of the principle, which had been so much disputed in that House. *The reduction of the currency had originated in the prices fall of*

the prices of agricultural produce. This fall had produced a destruction of the country-bank paper to an extent which would not have been thought possible without more ruin than had ensued. The Bank of England had also reduced its issues, as appeared by the accounts recently presented. The average amount of their currency was not, during the last year, more than between twenty-five and twenty-six millions; while two years ago it had been nearer twenty-nine millions, and at one time even amounted to thirty-one millions. But without looking to the diminution of the Bank of England paper, the reduction of country paper was enough to account for the fall which had taken place. Another evil which had resulted from the state of the currency, which he had foreseen and predicted, but which had been deemed visionary, was, that during the war we had borrowed money, which was then of small value, and we were now obliged to pay it at a high value. This was the most formidable evil which threatened our finances; and, though he had too high an opinion of the resources of the country, and of the wisdom of the government, to despair, he was appalled when he considered the immense amount of the interest of the debt contracted in that artificial currency, compared with the produce of the taxes. . . . Looking forward to the operation of this restriction in time of peace, it would be found to leave us without any known or certain standard of money to regulate the transactions, not only between the public and its creditors, but between individuals. The currency which was to prevail was not only uncertain, but cruel and unjust in its operation—at one time upon those whose income was fixed in money, and to all creditors—at another time, when by some accident it was diminished in amount, to all debtors. Was not this an evil sufficient to attract the attention of a wise, a benevolent, and a prudent government? If they looked at the agricultural interest, was not a fluctuation of prices the greatest of evils to the farmer? For, supposing prices were fixed and steady, it was indifferent to him what was the standard. As long as we had no standard—no fixed value of money—but it was suffered to rise and fall like the quick-silver in the barometer, no man could conduct his property with any

than in most other parts of the kingdom, and that the labourers should not have been impelled to outrage by 'hard necessity and want.'

Incendiary fires, attempts at plunder, riots put down by military force, spread alarm through districts chiefly agricultural. The distress which had fallen upon the manufacturing and other non-agricultural portions of the population was manifested in many signal ways. At the beginning of July, a body of colliers, thrown out of employment by the stoppage of ironworks at Bilston, took the singular resolution of setting out to London, for the purpose of submitting their distresses in a petition to the prince-regent, and presenting him with two waggons of coals, which they drew along with them. One party advanced as far as St. Albans, and another reached Maidenhead Thicket. The Home Office took the precaution of sending a strong body of police, with magistrates, from London, to meet these poor fellows, and induce them to return; and they were successful. The men, who had conducted themselves with the most perfect order, were satisfied to depart homewards, having been paid for their coals, and accepting also some charitable contribution. They bore a placard: 'Willing to work, but none of us to beg;' and they required certificates from the magistrates that they had conducted themselves with propriety. Their example was followed by other unemployed colliers from Staffordshire, who yoked themselves in a similar way to loaded waggons. But their progress towards London was not very considerable. The distresses of the workmen in the iron trade were quite appalling. Utter desolation prevailed in districts where ironworks had been suspended. The workmen in these districts used to be surrounded with many comforts. They had saved a little money. The factories were shut up; the furnaces blown out; the coal-pits closed. Then the neat cottages, where hundreds of families had lived in comfort, were gradually stripped of every article of furniture; the doors of these once cheerful dwellings were barred; the families were wandering about the country, seeking for that relief from private charity which the parishes could not offer. Depredation was very rare. Later in the year,

the miners and colliers connected with the great iron-works in the neighbourhood of Merthyr, assembled in a tumultuous manner; and their numbers gradually swelling till they reached ten or twelve thousand, they finally extinguished the blast at several works, but did little other damage. These men were on very reduced wages, but their distress does not seem to have been nearly so great as the utter destitution of the Staffordshire colliers.

In the year 1812 an act was passed 'for the more exemplary punishment of persons destroying or injuring any stocking or lace frames, or other machines or engines used in the framework-knitting manufactory, or any articles or goods in such frames or machines.' The object of the act was to make the offence capital. The cause for this increase to the fearful list of offences to which the penalty of death was attached, was the system of riot and destruction, bordering on insurrection, which had prevailed in Nottingham and the adjacent counties for more than three months. There never before was such an organised system of havoc resorted to by men who were at once grossly ignorant and pre-eminently crafty. 'The depredations had been carried on with a greater degree of secrecy and management than had ever been known in any similar proceedings; so much so, that the magistrates could not take upon themselves to apprehend the persons whom they suspected of having committed the outrages. It was peculiarly easy for parties who were ill-disposed, to perpetrate those illegal acts; for, in many instances, the machinery was used in isolated houses, which were far from any neighbourhood, and persons having secreted themselves about the premises, felt no difficulty in destroying the frames, which could be performed with very little noise. In one instance, the mischief had been done actually in sight of the military; and in another, they were not more than one hundred yards from the premises. The rioters had also occasionally gone to the villages in bodies of about fifty men, and having stationed sentinels at the different avenues, the remainder employed themselves in destroying all the frames; and this was executed with so much secrecy, that not a trace of the parties was left in the course of a few minutes.' Such was the

character of the Luddite insurrection of 1812. In spite of the increase of punishment, the system was never wholly put down. In 1816 it broke forth with new violence. At Loughborough, in July, many frames employed in the manufacture of lace were destroyed with the same secrecy as in 1812. Armed bands, under the command of a chief, held the inhabitants in nightly terror, commanding them to put out their lights, and keep within their houses, under penalty of death. Their ravages were not confined to the towns: they would march with suddenness and secrecy to distant villages, and rapidly effect their purposes of destruction. The General Ludd, who led on these armed and disguised desperadoes, would address his forces in a short speech, divide them into parties, and assign their respective operations. Then, in the silence of night, would houses and factories be broken open, frames and other machines demolished, unfinished work scattered on the highways, furniture be wholly destroyed. The ignorance which has more or less prevailed at all times on the subject of machinery—coupled with the want of employment produced by the depression of every branch of industry—was the cause that, undeterred by the terrible penalties of the law, the Luddites still pursued the course which had well-nigh driven the lace manufacture from their district, and converted temporary into permanent ruin. The futility of the legislation of 1812 was well exposed in a protest of Lords Lauderdale and Rosslyn on the introduction of the bill: ‘We agree in the opinion so generally expressed in this House, that the conduct of the manufacturers, in destroying frames and other machinery used in our manufactures, must proceed from mistaken views of their own interest, as they, more than any other class of his majesty’s subjects, are deeply interested in the preservation of machinery, to the improvement of which we owe our existence as a manufacturing country. But we think it our duty, strongly and in distinct terms, to reprobate the unprecedented folly of attempting to enlighten the minds of men in regard to what is beneficial for themselves, by increased severity of punishment; whilst every sound principle of criminal legislation makes us regard such an

addition to the long list of offences already subjected to capital punishment by the laws of this country, with astonishment and disgust; and every feeling of humanity leads us to express the utmost horror at the wanton cruelty of punishing our fellow-creatures with death for these culpable acts, more injurious to themselves than to any other part of the community, to which, through mistaken views of policy, the increasing distress of the times has induced them to resort.'

The wealthier classes of this country are never wanting in the disposition to relieve the distresses of their fellow-subjects by liberal contributions. The sufferings of the poor in 1816 were too manifest not to call forth an unusual amount of public sympathy, displayed in subscriptions for relief, and in schemes for providing employment. However local charity may have mitigated the intensity of the evil arising out of the general exhaustion of capital, a calm review of the more ostentatious exertions of that period forces upon us the conclusion that such attempts are for the most part wholly inefficient—more calculated to produce a deceptive calm in the minds of those who give, than to afford any real or permanent benefit to those who receive.

On the 29th July a very remarkable meeting took place at the City of London Tavern, 'to take into consideration the present distressed state of the lower classes, and the most effectual means of extending relief to them.' The Duke of York took the chair; the Duke of Kent and the Duke of Cambridge moved resolutions; the Archbishop of Canterbury and the Bishop of London also took part in the proceedings, as well as several peers, the chancellor of the exchequer, and Mr. Wilberforce. This meeting for purposes of holy charity was converted into a political brawl. It was a time of brawlers; but the rude energy and the bad taste of much of the declamation that disturbed the quiet of public meetings was not wholly removed from strong sense and unanswerable reasoning. Lord Cochrane, on this occasion, compelled the alteration of a resolution which declared 'That the transition from an extensive warfare to a system of peace has occasioned a stagnation of employment and a revulsion of trade.' The

promoters of the meeting consented to affirm the fact, without setting up a delusive cause. The Duke of Kent, who moved the first resolution, said: 'If *they* should be so happy as but to succeed in discovering new sources of employment, to supply the place of those channels which had been suddenly shut up, he should indeed despond if we did not soon restore the country to that same flourishing condition which had long made her the envy of the world.' The goodness of the intention could only be exceeded by the absurdity of the means. Here was a body of the great and wealthy coming forward to subscribe some forty or fifty thousand, perhaps even a hundred thousand pounds, not merely to give away as bread and soup to two or three millions of suffering labourers and their families, but to find out of this fifty or a hundred thousand pounds capital, new sources of employment, which the millions of capital that were devoted to the ordinary courses of industry would have instantly created, if such new employments could have been profitably exercised. The new employment was, of course, to be unprofitable; it could afford no returns to produce continued employment. The promoters of this meeting themselves saw something of the fallacy, and talked of the inadequacy of their means to relieve national distress. The persons who disturbed the usual placid and complimentary course of such proceedings, clamoured for remission of taxation, reduced expenditure, abolition of sinecures. Upon this subject the chief organ of government thus expressed the opinions of the wealthier classes; 'Such numerous bodies of men having been thrown out of employ, every good man perceived the necessity of affording them temporary relief, and the propriety of relieving the poor-rates by voluntary aid, till alternative measures of permanent policy could be devised and brought into action for gradually removing a burthen that was becoming intolerable.' According to this authority, the subscriptions did not add to the fund for the relief of distress; they were in aid of the poor-rates, and not in addition to them. The poor-rates in 1816 were half a million less than in 1814; the price of bread was higher; the population was increased; and the number of quarters of wheat for which the money raised

by poor-rate could have been exchanged, was two hundred and forty-thousand quarters less in 1816 than in 1814, and two hundred thousand quarters less in 1816 than in 1815. To put the efficiency of the poor-rates upon the same level in 1816 as they were in 1814, by the aid of voluntary subscriptions, the committee of the London Tavern ought to have raised as much money as would have purchased two hundred and fifty thousand quarters of wheat, which at the time of this great meeting would have cost more than a million sterling. We mention these facts, not to make ourselves obnoxious to the reproof then levelled against the reformers, that they realised the old story of the Needy Knife-grinder and the Friend of Humanity, but to point out the folly of deceiving our own consciences as to the power of alms-giving to afford adequate relief in great periods of national distress. The first duty of the capitalist is to understand what are the real claims of labour under ordinary circumstances, and what the amount of assistance that can be rendered under extraordinary contingencies. It is the duty of government so to shape its policy that the necessary inequalities of demand and supply shall not be rendered more oppressive by false legislation. All contention for interests of classes or individuals—all blindness to the dreadful calamity of an unemployed, inadequately paid, starving, and therefore dangerous population—are best exhibited in their fatal consequences, when it is seen how totally incompetent is the heartiest exercise of private benevolence to remedy great public suffering. The economical mistakes of such private benevolence would be matters of ridicule if they were not so awful in their delusions. In 1816, hand corn-mills were recommended for the employment of the poor, to supersede the labour of the miller; and women and even men were actually employed to shell beans in the fields, to supersede the more efficient labour of the thrasher. Minor schemes were recommended in London, and published to the world authoritatively, as remedies for the absence of profitable employment. Of these the most notable were the making of cordage out of hop-bines and weeds; the gathering of rushes to manufacture candles from the grease-pot; the

plaiting of baskets out of flags; and the mixture of fire-balls out of clay and cinders, to supersede coals. It is perfectly clear that if these employments could be found profitable by the sale of the articles produced, the regular employment in rope-making, or candle-making, or basket-making, or coal-mining, would have been diminished. Even the soup-kitchens, which in 1816 were set up through the country, to avert starvation, had their evils. The recipients of the benevolence were discontented with its limited amount. At Glasgow some imaginary insult offered by a doler of the soup to the more unfortunate of that large community, stung the people to madness; the soup-kitchen, with its coppers and ladles, was destroyed; the outrage swelled to riot; the military were called in; and for two days the populous city was exposed to a contest between the soldiers and the mob. At Dundee the people relieved themselves in the old summary way of plunder; a hundred shops were ransacked.

CHAPTER V.

Parliamentary Reform—Writings of Cobbett—Hampden Clubs—Spenceans—Address of the City—Real Dangers.

LORD BACON, discoursing of the second cause of sedition—'discontentments'—says; 'There is in every state, as we know, two portions of subjects, the noblesse and the commonalty. When one of these is discontent, the danger is not great; for common people are of slow motion, if they be not excited by the greater sort; and the greater sort are of small strength, except the multitude be apt and ready to move of themselves.' We at once perceive that the experience of Lord Bacon was limited to a totally different state of society than that of modern England. On one hand was 'the noblesse,' 'the greater sort'—the makers of laws, the exclusive possessors of power; on the other, 'the commonalty,' 'the common people,' 'the multitude'—strong in union, feeble in individuality. It required a century and a half to constitute an efficient

third class—the middle class—the *bourgeoisie* of the French. The commonalty was then cut into two sections—the most influential of the two standing between the higher class and the lower class. The term ‘lower class,’ or ‘lower classes,’ is gone out of use. The term is thought not complimentary to the democracy, and so we say ‘the working-class,’ which is less precise, and conveys false notions. The union which Lord Bacon exhibited as the most fearful to the sovereign power, was that which sprang from the common discontent of the nobles and the people. A monarch, according to the great imaginative philosopher, should be the Jupiter whom Pallas counselled to call Briareus, with his hundred arms, to his aid. Sure of the good-will of the common people, he was safe. We see how all this consists with the government of the Tudors and the first Stuart; how strictly it represents the attributes of an imperfect civilization; how much remained to be developed before the more favoured of fortune, the more complete in education and intelligence of ‘the commonalty,’ could be raised up into a new class. The far grander problem of the full development of the class lowest in point of wealth and power—of the class highest in point of numbers—of the most truly important class with reference to the happiness and safety of modern societies—this problem is little advanced toward solution in our own day. It scarcely formed an element in the habitual consideration of a legislator thirty years ago. And yet the agitation of this class convulsed our whole social system at that period. Those struggles were, in truth, the first moving forces of the great changes which have since taken place in the political position of the class next above the masses; and, as a natural consequence, indirectly in their own position.

Up to the close of 1816, the spirit of parliamentary reform was seldom evoked in the British parliament. When the spirit was occasionally raised, upon the presentation of some stray petition, it had no alarms for the most timid, and very few consolations for the most ardent. It was a good quiet spirit ‘in the cellarage’—an ‘old mole’—that called out, in antiquated phrase, about Magna Charta and the Bill of Rights; and the House of Commons

listened as to some gabble which concerned it not, and went on with its proper work of Whig and Tory fence, conducted upon the most approved principles of the first masters of the science. But the 'worthy pioneer' got above ground in 1816, and, when he was fairly loosened to the open sky, he was not quite so tame, and innocent, and stupid a spirit as his ordinary supporters and his systematic revilers had been in the habit of believing him to be.

The House of Commons was not generally popular in 1816. We have better evidence for the fact than that of the pamphleteering or oratorical champions of reform. Mr. Hallam, a calm, constitutional Whig of that day, rejoices over the defeat of the ministry on the property-tax, chiefly because that decision had removed 'the danger of increasing the odium under which the House of Commons already labours among a large class of people, by so decidedly resisting the wishes of the nation.' And yet the call for parliamentary reform seems to have made itself very feebly heard in the Lower House at this period. With the exception of some four or five petitions that produced very slight discussion, it would scarcely be thought, from an inspection of the parliamentary debates, that such a question agitated any part of the nation at all. On one occasion, in June, some members spoke very briefly upon the subject. One complained of the apathy with which the question was regarded in England; another (Mr. Brougham) mentioned the cause as 'opposed by some, deserted by others, and espoused by persons whose conduct excited no small degree of disgust out of doors.' But from this time the name of parliamentary reform became, for the most part, a name of terror to the government—to the elevated by rank and wealth—to the most influential of the middle classes. It became fearful from the causes which would have made it contemptible in ordinary times. It was 'espoused by persons whose conduct excited no small degree of disgust out of doors.' It passed away from the patronage of a few aristocratic lovers of popularity, to be advocated by writers of 'twopenny trash,' and to be discussed and organised by 'Hampten Clubs' of hungering philanthropists and unemployed 'weaver-boys.'

Let us hear the evidence upon this matter of a remark-

similar pressure of suffering. Of this fact the sad scenes at Dundee are a strong and remarkable instance. At the great and populous towns of Norwich, Manchester, Paisley, Glasgow, Wigan, Bolton, Liverpool, and many, many others, where the people are suffering in a degree that makes the heart sick within one to think of, they have had their meetings to petition for reform; they have agreed on petitions; hope has been left in their bosoms, they have been inspired with patience and fortitude; and all is tranquil. But, at Dundee, where a partial meeting had been held early in November, and where a gentleman who moved for reform had been borne down, there violence has broken forth, houses have been plundered, and property and life exposed to all sort of perils, and this, too, amongst the sober, the sedate, the reflecting, the prudent, the moral people of Scotland.'

The writings of William Cobbett, at this critical period, are certainly amongst the most valuable of the materials for a correct view of the disturbing elements of our social system, and of the circumstances which led to the subsequent repressive policy of the government. Up to the 2nd November 1816, Cobbett's *Weekly Political Register* was a publication, not addressed to the 'cottage hearth,' but to persons who could afford to pay a shilling and a half-penny weekly, for a single octavo stamped sheet, printed in open type. His writings, singularly clear and argumentative, strong in personalities, earnest, bold, never halting between two opinions, powerful beyond all anonymous writing from their rare individuality, would have commanded an extensive influence under any form of publication. But on the 2nd November, when the entire sheet was devoted to an address 'To the Journeymen and Labourers of England, Scotland, and Ireland,' Cobbett added this announcement: 'This address, printed upon an open sheet, will be sold by the publisher at 2d. each, and for 12s. 6d. a hundred, if a hundred are taken together.' On the 16th November, he wrote thus: 'The *Register*, No. 18, which was reprinted on an open sheet, to be sold for 2d. by retail, having been found to be very useful, it is my intention to continue that mode of proceeding until the meeting of parliament, or perhaps until the reform

shall have actually taken place. . . . Now, events are pressing upon us so fast, that my *Register*, loaded with more than half its amount in stamp, and other expenses incidental to the stamp, does not move about sufficiently swift to do all the good that it might do. I have therefore resolved to make it move swifter.' He goes on to say that the stamped *Register* was 'read in meetings of people in many towns, and one copy was thus made to convey information to scores of persons; but that he finds, in public-houses, 'the landlords have objected to meetings for reading the *Register* being held at their houses, for fear they should lose their licences.' He accordingly prints the twopenny *Register*. We see, therefore, why, at the end of 1816, 'the writings of William Cobbett suddenly became of great authority, and were read on nearly every cottage hearth in the manufacturing districts.' Never before had any single writer in England wielded such a power. The success of this experiment upon the influence to be produced by cheap publications was such as to lead him to reprint some of the more exciting of his previous *Registers*. That they gave the discontent of the labouring classes a new direction, cannot be doubted; that they did much to repress riot and outrage, may fairly be conceded. His 'Letter to the Luddites,' on the 30th November, is a master-piece of reasoning against the ignorant hostility to machinery, and must have been far more effectual than a regiment of dragoons. But that they were scattering the seeds of a greater danger than the outrage and plunder of infuriated mobs cannot be denied. Their object was suddenly to raise up the great masses of labourers and mechanics into active politicians; to render the most impatient and uncontrollable materials of our social system the most preponderating—hitherto as powerless alone as the 'commonalty' of Bacon, without the leading of the 'greater sort.' The danger was evident; the means of repression were not so clear. The effect of Cobbett's writings may be estimated by the violence of his opponents, as well as the admiration of his disciples. From the date of his twopenny *Registers* he was stigmatised as a 'firebrand,' 'a convicted incendiary.' 'Why is it that this convicted incendiary, and others of the same stamp,

are permitted, week after week, to sow the seeds of rebellion, insulting the government, and defying the laws of the country? We have laws to prevent the exposure of unwholesome meat in our markets, and the mixture of deleterious drugs in beer. We have laws also against poisoning the minds of the people, by exciting discontent and disaffection; why are not these laws rendered effectual, and enforced as well as the former?' The answer is very obvious. The laws, as they stood at the end of 1816, when this was written, could not touch William Cobbett. He knew well how to manage his strength. He risked no libels. He dealt with general subjects. He called upon the people to assemble and to petition. He exhorted the people against the use of force. He sowed the dragon's teeth, it is true, but they did not rise up as armed men. They rose up in the far more dangerous apparition of the masses, without property, without education, without leaders of any weight or responsibility, demanding the supreme legislative power—the power of universal suffrage. The idea ceased to be a theory—it became a tremendous reality.

In the report of the secret committee of the House of Commons, presented on the 19th February 1817, the Hampden Clubs are thus described:

'The first thing which has here forced itself upon their observation is the widely diffused ramification of a system of clubs, associated professedly for the purpose of parliamentary reform, upon the most extended principle of universal suffrage and annual parliaments. These clubs in general designate themselves by the same name of Hampden Clubs. On the professed object of their institution, they appear to be in communication and connection with the club of that name in London.

'It appears to be part of the system of these clubs, to promote an extension of clubs of the same name and nature, so widely as, if possible, to include every village in the kingdom. The leading members are active in the circulation of publications likely to promote their object. Petitions, ready prepared, have been sent down from the metropolis to all societies in the country deputed to receive them. The communication between the

clubs takes place by the mission of delegates; delegates from these clubs in the country have assembled in London, and are expected to assemble again early in March. Whatever may be the real objects of these clubs in general, your committee have no hesitation in stating, from information on which they place full reliance, that in far the greater number of them, and particularly in those which are established in the great manufacturing districts of Lancashire, Leicestershire, Nottinghamshire, and Derbyshire, and which are composed of the lower order of artisans, nothing short of a revolution is the object expected and avowed.'

The clear and honest testimony of Samuel Bamford shows that, in this early period of their history, the Hampden Clubs limited their object to the attainment of parliamentary reform—a sweeping reform, indeed, but not what is understood by the term 'revolution.' Bamford was secretary to one of these clubs established at Middleton in 1816. The members contributed each a penny a week; their numbers increased; and they held their meetings in a chapel which had been previously occupied by a society of Methodists. They were called 'reformers'—not radical reformers, but simply reformers. Meetings of delegates from other districts were held in this chapel; and on the 16th December 1816, they resolved to send out missionaries to disseminate the principles of reform. On the 1st of January 1817, a meeting of delegates from twenty-one petitioning bodies was held at the Middleton Chapel, when resolutions were passed, declaratory of the right of every male, above eighteen years of age, and who paid taxes, to vote for the election of members of parliament, and that parliaments should be elected annually. 'Such,' he adds, 'were the moderate views and wishes of the reformers of those days, as compared with the present. . . . Some of the nostrum-mongers of the present day would have been made short work of by the reformers of that time; they would not have been tolerated for more than one speech, but handed over to the civil power. It was not until we became infested by spies, incendiaries, and their dupes—distracting, misleading, and betraying—that physical force was mentioned amongst us. After that,

a breach of order by some individual of warm temperament; half-a-dozen would rise to set him right; a dozen to put them down; and the vociferation and gesticulation would become loud and confounding. The door opens, and two persons of middle stature enter; the uproar is changed to applause, and a round of huzzas welcome the new-comers. A stranger like myself inquiring who is he, the foremost and better dressed one? would be answered; "That gentleman is Mr. Watson the elder, who was lately charged with high treason, and is now under bail to answer an indictment for a misdemeanour in consequence of his connection with the late meeting in Spa-fields." The person spoken of would be supposed to be about fifty years of age, with somewhat of a polish in his gait and manner, and a degree of respectability and neatness in his dress. He was educated for a genteel profession, that of a surgeon; had practised it, and had in consequence moved in a sphere more high than his present one. He had probably a better heart than head; the latter had failed to bear him up in his station, and the ardour of the former had just before hurried him into transactions from the consequences of which he has not yet escaped. His son at this time was concealed in London, a large reward having been offered for his apprehension. The other man was Preston, a co-operator with Watson, Hooper, and others in late riots. He was about middle age; of ordinary appearance, dressed as an operative, and walked with the help of a stick. I could not but entertain a slightful opinion of the intellect and trustworthiness of these two men, when, on a morning or two afterwards, at breakfast with me and Mitchell, they narrated with seeming pride and satisfaction their several parts during the riots. Preston had mounted a wall of the Tower, and summoned the guard to surrender. The men gazed at him—laughed; no one fired a shot—and soon after he fell down, or was pulled off by his companions, who thought, no doubt, he had acted fool long enough.

The 'late meeting at Spa-fields' here alluded to—the leaders of that meeting who loomed upon the Middleton delegate out of the reeking tobacco fog of a low tavern—were destined to become of historical importance. The

general liberties of the country were suspended, chiefly through dread of the conspiracies of such men as the surgeon 'with somewhat of a polish in his gait and manner,' and the operative who 'walked with the help of a stick.'

The surgeon and the operative were leading members of a society called the 'Spencean Philanthropists.' They derived their name from that of a Mr. Spence, a schoolmaster in Yorkshire, who had conceived a plan for making the nation happy, by causing all the lands of the country to become the property of the state, which state should divide all the produce for the support of the people. The schoolmaster was an honest enthusiast, who fearlessly submitted his plan to the consideration of all lovers of their species, and had the misfortune to be prosecuted for its promulgation in 1800. In 1816, 'Spence's Plan' was revived, and the Society of Spencean Philanthropists was instituted, who held 'sectional meetings,' and discussed 'subjects calculated to enlighten the human understanding.' This great school of philosophy had its separate academies, as London was duly informed by various announcements, at 'the Cock in Grafton Street, Soho;' and 'the Mulberry Tree, Moorfields;' and 'the Nag's Head, Carnaby Market;' and 'No. 8, Lumber Street, Borough.' At these temples of benevolence where 'every individual is admitted, free of expense, who will conduct himself with decorum,' it is not unlikely that some esoteric doctrines were canvassed, such as, that 'it was an easy matter to upset government, if handled in a proper manner.' The committee of the Spenceans openly meddled with sundry grave questions besides that of a community in land; and amongst other notable projects, petitioned parliament to do away with machinery. They had not advanced to the more recondite knowledge of the St. Simoniens of France, nor to that of the disciples of 'the new social system,' as expounded by M. Louis Blanc. But they had many very pretty theories, all founded upon the breaking up of the unequal distribution of individual property; which theories are sometimes produced by the philanthropists of our own day as prodigious discoveries. Amongst these otherwise harmless fanatics some dangerous

government, and were ready with 'lives and fortunes' to put down the revolutionary spirit which they were assured was working under the guise of parliamentary reform. But, during all this unhappy time, the government had no love from any class—very little respect; intense hate from many—slavish fear from more. The government was denationalising the people. There was no confidence on either side. The wounds of the state during the last years of the regency were more severe than the wounds of war, and left deeper scars. The foundations of the state were loosened; there was no cohesion in the materials out of which the state was built up. The government took the fearful course of sowing distrust of the poor amongst the rich. The demagogues did their own counter-work of exciting hatred of the rich amongst the poor. It was a season of reciprocal distrust. 'Divide and govern' may be a safe maxim for subduing a faction; it is the most perilous principle for ruling a nation.

CHAPTER VI.

Algiers—Bombardment—Progress of Social Improvement.

THE attack upon Algiers forms an episode in the history of the peace. This terrific assertion of the rights of civilised states, as opposed to barbarian violence and aggression, was, indeed, a consequence of the peace. The pirates of the Mediterranean were nourished in their lawless power by the jealousies of the maritime states of Europe; and England is perhaps not entirely free from the reproach which was raised against her, of having truckled to the insolent domination of Algiers and Tunis, that she might hold them, like ferocious beasts in her leash, ready to let slip upon her maritime enemies. War calls forth as many of the selfish as of the heroic passions. At any rate, the attitude which England assumed towards the Barbary states, at the termination of the war, was wholly different from that which she had maintained during many years, and under many governments,

whether in war or in peace. Our treaties with these states had been of longer standing than those with any other European power. The treaties with Algiers, Tunis, and Tripoli, date as far back as 1662. With the exception of one vigorous reprisal for an outrage upon the English flag in 1695, the greatest maritime country in the world had, for a century and a half, exchanged courtesies with the corsairs, who not only robbed upon the seas, but carried off the defenceless inhabitants of the Italian shores to the most fearful and hopeless slavery. With the full knowledge of the extent of these atrocities, we continued, up to the very end of the war, to treat these piratical governments with the respect due only to those states which submit to the law of nations. Lord Cochrane stated in parliament in 1816, that, three or four years before, the humiliating duty had been imposed upon him of carrying rich presents from our government to the Dey of Algiers; and it was even asserted, without contradiction, that a letter had been addressed to that chief pirate by the highest authority in our country. All this took place with the fullest conviction that the habits of the barbarian governments were wholly unchanged; that they were the same in the latter days of George III. as they were in the days of Charles II. 'Algiers,' says a writer of 1680, 'is a den of sturdy thieves formed into a body, by which, after a tumultuary sort, they govern, having the grand signior for their protector, who supplies them with native Turks for their soldiery, which is the greatest part of their militia; and they, in acknowledgment, lend him their ships when his affairs require it. They are grown a rich and powerful people, and, by a long practice of piracy, become good seamen; and, when pressed by our men of war, as of late we have experimented, they fight and defend themselves like brave men, inferior, I am persuaded, to no people whatever. They have no commerce, and so are without any taste of the benefits of peace; whence their life becomes a continual practice of robbery, and, like beasts of the desert, they only forbear to wrong where by fear, not honesty, they are deterred.'

And yet, however mean we may justly consider this

tremendous firing on both sides continued without intermission, and the firing did not cease altogether until half-past eleven. During this engagement of nine hours, the allied fleet fired a hundred and eighteen tons of gunpowder, and five hundred tons of shot and shells. The Algerines exclaimed that hell had opened its mouth upon them through the English ships. That the Algerines had plied their instruments of destruction with no common alacrity is sufficiently shown by the fact, that eight hundred and fifty-two officers and men were killed in the British squadron, and sixty-five in the Dutch. Lord Exmouth himself says in his despatch: 'There were awful moments during the conflict which I cannot now attempt to describe, occasioned by firing the ships so near us.' Salamé says that one of the Algerine frigates which was in flames, drifted towards the *Queen Charlotte*, within about fifty feet of her; but a breeze springing up, carried the burning frigate towards the town. The Algerine batteries around Lord Exmouth's division were silenced about ten o'clock, and were in a complete state of ruin and dilapidation; but a fort at the upper angle of the city continued to annoy our ships, whose firing had almost ceased. This was the moment of the most serious danger to our fleet. Our means of attack were well-nigh expended; the upper batteries of the city could not be reached by our guns; the ships were becalmed. 'Providence at this interval,' says Lord Exmouth, 'gave to my anxious wishes the usual land wind, common in this bay, and my expectations were completed. We were all hands employed warping and towing off, and by the help of the light air the whole were under sail, and came to anchor out of reach of shells about two in the morning, after twelve hours' incessant labour.' There, when the ships had hauled out beyond the reach of danger, a sublime spectacle was presented to the wondering eyes of the interpreter, who had ventured out of the safety of the cockpit to the poop of the *Queen Charlotte*. Nine Algerine frigates and a number of gun-boats were burning within the bay; the store-houses within the mole were on fire; the blaze illumined all the bay, and showed the town and its

environs almost as clear as in the daytime; instead of walls the batteries presented nothing to the sight but heaps of rubbish; and out of these ruins the Moors and Turks were busily employed in dragging their dead. When the fleet had anchored, a storm arose—not so violent as the storm which here destroyed the mighty fleet of Charles V., and left his magnificent army, which had landed to subdue the barbarians, to perish by sword and famine—but a storm of thunder and lightning which filled up the measure of sublimity, at the close of the twelve awful hours of battle and slaughter.

It is unnecessary for us minutely to trace the progress of the subsequent negotiations with the humbled and sulky Dey. On the morning of the 28th, Lord Exmouth wrote a letter to this chief, who had himself fought with courage, in which the same terms of peace were offered as on the previous day. ‘If you receive this offer as you ought, you will fire three guns,’ wrote Lord Exmouth. The three guns were fired, the Dey made apologies, and treaties of peace and amity were finally signed, to be very soon again broken. The enduring triumph of this expedition was the release, within three days of the battle, of a thousand and eighty-three Christian slaves, who arrived from the interior, and who were immediately conveyed to their respective countries. ‘When I arrived on shore,’ says Salamé, ‘it was the most pitiful sight to see all those poor creatures, in what a horrible state they were; but it is impossible to describe the joy and cheerfulness of them. When our boats came inside the mole, I wished to receive them (the slaves) from the captain of the port by number, but could not, because they directly began to push and throw themselves into the boats by crowds, ten or twenty persons together, so that it was impossible to count them: then I told him that we should make an exact list of them, in order to know to what number they amounted. It was, indeed, a most glorious and an ever-memorably merciful act for England, over all Europe, to see these poor slaves, when our boats were shoving with them off the shore, all at once take off their hats and exclaim in Italian: ‘Viva il Ré d’Ingliterra, il padre eterno! e ’l ammiraglio Inglese che ci ha liberato da questo secondo

olution of this great problem in our own days; but we have made some steps towards its attainment.

The revolting cruelty and the disgusting absurdity of our criminal laws, thirty years ago, were in perfect harmony with the system of police, which had then arrived at its perfection of imbecile wickedness. The machinery for the prevention and detection of crime was exactly accommodated to the machinery for its punishment. On the 3rd of April, on the motion of Mr. Bennet, a committee of the House of Commons was appointed to inquire into the state of the police of the metropolis. The committee was resumed in 1817; and two reports were presented, which were amongst the first causes of the awakening of the public mind to a sense of the frightful evils which were existing in what we flattered ourselves to be the most civilized city in the world. Twelve years after, a committee of the House of Commons thus described the police system of 1816 and 1817: 'If a foreign jurist had then examined the condition of the metropolis, as respected crime, and the organisation of its police—and if, without tracing the circumstances from which that organisation arose, he had inferred design from the ends to which it appeared to conduce—he might have brought forward plausible reasons for believing that it was craftily framed by a body of professional depredators, upon a calculation of the best means of obtaining from society, with security to themselves, the greatest quantity of plunder. He would have found the metropolis divided and subdivided into petty jurisdictions, each independent of every other, each having sufficiently distinct interests to engender perpetual jealousies and animosities, and being sufficiently free from any general control to prevent any intercommunity of reformation or any unity of action.' Another committee of the House of Commons, reporting in 1833, says of the same system; 'The police was roused into earnest action only as some flagrant violation of the public peace, or some deep injury to private individuals, impelled it into exertion; and security to persons and property was sought to be obtained, not by the activity and wholesome vigour of a preventive police, which it is a paramount duty of the state to provide, but by resorting from time to time, as an

occasional increase of the more violent breaches of the law demanded it, to the highest and ultimate penalties of that law, in the hope of checking the more desperate offenders.' The same report says; 'Flash-houses were then declared to be a necessary part of the police system, where known thieves, with the full knowledge of the magistrates and public officers, assembled; until the state, or individuals, from the losses they had sustained, or the wrongs they had suffered, bid high enough for their detection.'

Flash-houses, known in the scientific phraseology of the police as 'flash-cribs,' 'shades,' and 'infernals,' were filthy dens, where thieves and abandoned females were always to be found, riotous or drowsy, surrounded by children of all ages, qualifying for their degrees in the college of crime. 'There,' says a Middlesex magistrate, examined before the committee of 1816, 'they (the children) see thieves and thief-takers sitting and drinking together on terms of good-fellowship; all they see and hear is calculated to make them believe they may rob without fear of punishment; for in their thoughtless course they do not reflect that the forbearance of the officers will continue no longer than until they commit a forty-pound crime, when they will be sacrificed. A forty-pound crime!—the phraseology is as obsolete as if it were written in the pedler's French of the rogues of the sixteenth century. A forty-pound crime was a crime for whose detection the state adjudged a reward, to be paid on conviction, of forty pounds; and, as a necessary consequence, the whole race of thieves were fostered into a steady advance from small offences to great, till they gratefully ventured upon some deed of more than common atrocity, which should bestow the blood-money upon the officers of the law who had so long petted and protected them. The system received a fatal blow in 1816, in the detection of three officers of the police, who had actually conspired to induce five men to commit a burglary for the purpose of obtaining the rewards upon their conviction. The highwaymen who infested the suburbs of the metropolis had been eradicated—they belonged to another age. Offences against the person were very rarely connected with any offences

demands of industry were confounded. The members of one class had insensibly slid into the other. The wages of idleness and vice, and the wages of industry and good conduct, were to be paid out of a common purse; and it is not therefore to be wondered at if the easier claim upon the wages had been generally preferred to the more laborious.

In 1816, the sum expended for the relief of the poor of England and Wales amounted to £5,724,839. The average annual expenditure had gradually increased from about two millions, at the commencement of the war, to six or seven millions at its close. A very large portion of the money that had been spent in fostering pauperism during the war years, by parish allowances in aid of wages, represents the amount of degradation and misery which the labourers endured, as compared with their unallowanced forefathers. The national debt represents, in a great degree, the money expended in unprofitable wars, the waste of capital upon objects that can only be justified by the last necessity, and which are the result of those evil passions which the improved knowledge and virtue of mankind may in time root out. In the same way, had the money expended upon fostering pauperism been raised upon loan, we should have had an amount of some two hundred millions, representing, in a like degree, the waste of capital expended in drying up the sources of industry and skill, and paying the alms of miserable indigence, instead of the wages of contented labour. It is difficult to conceive a more complete state of degradation than the allowanced labourers exhibited in 1816. With the feudal servitude had passed away the feudal protection. The parish servitude imposed the miseries and contumelies of slavery, without its exemption from immediate care and future responsibility. So far were the agricultural labourers slaves, that, although they could not be actually sold, like 'villeins in gross,' their labour was put up by auction to the best bidder by parish authorities. 'The overseer calls a meeting on Saturday evenings, where he puts up each labourer by name to auction; and they have been let generally at from 1s. 6d. to 2s. per week, and their provisions; their families being supported by the parish.' When we regard the high

price of food in 1816, with the inability of many tenants to pay poor-rates, we can scarcely be surprised at these barbarous attempts to diminish the pressure of the allowance system. The whole adjustment of the social relations between the employer and the labourer, under this system, was founded upon injustice and oppression on one hand, and fraud and improvidence on the other. The farmer refused to employ the labourer till he had reduced him, by withholding the employment, to beggary; robbed the labourer of his fair wages, to dole out to him 'head-money,' not according to his worth, but his necessities; denied employ to the single labourer at all; discharged his best workman, with a small family, to take on the worst with a large family; and left his own land uncultivated, that a congregation of worthless idlers might be paid upon the pretence of working on the roads, while the independent labourer was marked as a fool for making any attempt to 'earn his bread by the sweat of his brow.' The authorities doled out their allowances upon the most partial and despotic system. The squire, the clergyman, and the farmer constituted themselves a tribunal for the suppression of vice and the encouragement of virtue, and they succeeded in producing either desperation or hypocrisy amongst the entire labouring population. If the junta was completed by the addition of a paid assistant-overseer, the discrimination was perfect. Squalid filth was the test of destitution, and whining gratitude, as it was called, for the alms distributed, was the test of character. If a labourer with a manly bearing came to the overseer, or to the vestry, to remove some sudden calamity—if he asked something to prevent him selling his bed—he was insulted. The agonised tear of wounded pride might start from the eye, and perhaps the groan of suppressed indignation escape from the lips. If the groan was heard, that man's 'character' was gone for ever. The pretence to discriminate between the good and the evil, did much worse for the community than occasional injustice. It led away parish functionaries from the real object of their appointment—to administer relief to the indigent—into the belief that they were the great patrons of the whole labouring population, who could never go

the nature of their statutes, and their adherence to the objects of their foundation. An act was subsequently passed, in consequence of the labours of the committee, to appoint commissioners to inquire concerning the abuse of charities connected with education; and by a second act the right of inquiry was extended to all charities, the universities and certain great foundation schools excepted. The education commission was thus merged in the charity commission. Of the great national benefits that resulted from that commission no one can doubt. But it may be doubted whether the controversial shape which the question of education thus assumed, in 1818, did much to advance the disposition to provide a general system of popular instruction which prevailed in 1816. When Mr. Brougham first obtained his committee, he said, 'his proposition was, that a measure for the education of the poor under parliamentary sanction, and on parliamentary aid, should be tried in London; for without a previous experiment he should not deem it proper to bring forward any general measure. But if the experiment should be found to succeed in London, he would then recommend the extension of the plan to other great towns.' This plan was never carried out, nor further proposed. When Mr. Brougham presented his first report, there was unanimity and even cordiality in its reception by the House of Commons. Mr. Canning declared that 'he should contribute all his assistance to the object of the report, satisfied that the foundation of good order in society was good morals, and that the foundation of good morals was education.'

What was the temper of the House and of the country in 1818 is strikingly exhibited in a speech of Mr. Brougham's in 1835: 'In the year 1818 the labours of the education committee of the House of Commons—labours to which no man can attach too high a value—were made the subject of great controversy; a controversy as fierce and uncompromising as almost any that ever raged, and to which I only refer as affording another reason for the hope I so fondly cherish, that though now, perhaps, in a minority upon this, as upon many other questions here debated, I yet may ultimately find myself with scarcely an antagonist. That bitter controversy is at an end—the

heats which it kindled are extinguished—the matter that engendered those heats finds equal acceptance with all parties. Those are now still, or assenting, or even supporting me, who then thought that I was sowing broadcast the seeds of revolution, and who scrupled not to accuse me as aiming at the “dictatorship,” by undermining the foundations of all property. Those who once held that the education committee was pulling down the church, by pulling down the universities and the great schools—that my only design could be to raise some strange edifice of power upon the ruins of all our institutions, ecclesiastical and civil—have long ceased to utter even a whisper against whatever was then accomplished and have become my active coadjutors ever since. Nay, the very history of that fierce contention is forgotten. There are few now aware of a controversy having ever existed, which, a few years back, agitated all men all over the country; and the measures I then propounded among revilings and execrations, have long since become the law of the land. I doubt whether, at this moment, there are above some half-dozen of your lordships who recollect anything about a warfare which for months raged with unabated fury, both within the walls of the universities and without—which seemed to absorb all men’s attention, and to make one class apprehend the utter destruction of our political system, while it filled others with alarm lest a stop should be put to the advancement of the human mind. That all those violent animosities should have passed away, and that all those alarms be now sunk in oblivion, affords a memorable instance of the strange aberrations—I will not say of public opinion, but—of party feeling, in which the history of controversy so largely abounds. I have chiefly dwelt upon it to show why I again trust that I may outlive the storms which still are gathering round those who devote themselves rather to the improvement of their fellow-creatures than the service of a faction.’ From some unhappy prejudice, from apathy, or from cowardice, the education of the people made small legislative progress for twenty years. Perhaps the old fable of the sun and the wind, experimenting upon the removal of the traveller’s cloak, may afford us some solution of this

for the acquiescence of the United States. President Adams demurred and delayed; but the scheme was not given up; and we find it laid afresh before the Addington administration in 1801.

Within this cabinet, the schemes of government for the new states were discussed, and the military movements arranged for the outbreak, when the Peace of Amiens again suspended the subject. When war broke out afresh, and it was seen that Spain would go with France, the preparations were resumed, now once more under Mr. Pitt. Lord Melville and Sir Home Popham were in full communication with Miranda, when the third coalition, on which Mr. Pitt staked the last hopes of his hopeful life, was formed; and it was confidently expected that Napoleon would be put down from that quarter. The secret of the American enterprise had oozed out before this time. It, no doubt, gave Napoleon a new hold on the Spanish Bourbons. It was discussed in both their courts; and also among the allies, now gathering in Germany. Miranda proceeded to the United States, to organise there his revolutionary plans, in full reliance on British aid from Trinidad. This aid he received, in the form of ships of war and small vessels, which were to support him in an invading expedition; but suddenly, in the summer of 1806, he was warned to expect no more active assistance, but only protection from the enemy. The reason of this change was that Mr. Pitt was dead, and Lord Grenville in power.

It appears remarkable that the Tory governments, which had regarded with no good-will the independence of the United States, should be the supporters of the revolutionary party in South America, and soon afterwards in Spain; while the Whigs were those who disappointed Miranda, and groaned over the Peninsular war as dolefully as over the American war of 1812. It was said at the time that it was at the desire of Russia that Fox drew back from the South American cause. However that might be, all the party prepossessions of the Whigs were against the cause of independence. They had seen South America played off against the North in our American war; and they had seen Pitt plant his hopes on the South American

provinces in the continental war which they disapproved. So, as soon as the Grenville ministry came into power, it looked coldly on the protégés of its predecessors.

If the Grenville ministry would not help South America to free itself, it contemplated the subjugation of that continent. Sir Home Popham's expedition from the Cape against Buenos Ayres was, as has been related, his own scheme altogether. He could plead no authorisation from the government at home. But, as we have seen, the government at home adopted his scheme, and proceeded upon his beginnings. We remember Sir S. Auchmuty's expedition to Monte Video, and General Crawford's to Chili; the last being turned from its track to afford aid to the unhappy General Whitelocke in his attack on Buenos Ayres. We have a letter from Mr. Windham, then secretary at war—a 'most secret' letter to General Crawford—which desires that officer to keep down, by all means whatever, the insurrectionary spirit in the South American provinces, and to preserve the old methods of government, merely transferring the allegiance and obedience of the people from the King of Spain to the King of Great Britain. Mr. Windham and his colleagues left, as one of their disastrous bequests, the Buenos Ayres expedition; and the next cabinet was that of the Duke of Portland.

The Portland cabinet recurred to the Pitt and Addington policy. Every effort was made, that so weak a government could make, to afford assistance to the South American patriots. It is believed that, when the harbour of Cork was filling with transports, in the summer of 1808, and when Sir Arthur Wellesley was preparing for foreign service, everybody was looking across the Atlantic for the battle-field. To Sir Arthur's Indian wars would now have succeeded American victories, if the sudden uprising of Spain against Napoleon had not called the British general and his forces to the Peninsula. If Wellesley had gone to South America, the independence of the colonies there would have presently followed; but they were far from being forsaken, or from feeling themselves left in the lurch, by the scene of the struggle being fixed in Europe. From the moment that the army of

Caracas. The constitution mainly resembled that of the United States, except that there were three executive chiefs instead of one, and that the Roman Catholic religion was established; provision being made that no foreigners should be permitted to reside in the country, unless they respected its established faith.

It seems to have occurred to few or none of the parties concerned in these South American revolutions, to inquire whether the people were fit for self-government, or competent to settle how they would be governed. The old colonial rule was indefensible on every ground, and intolerable to the people. But it was a long step to take at once from that system to a constitution like that of the United States. Here were mixed races and severed factions, burning with jealousy, revenge, ambition, and every other evil passion: here was a total popular ignorance of the very meaning of law and government: here were habits of disorder, in alternation and reaction with tyrannical coercion: and here was an exclusive religion, sunk to the lowest point of superstition, by which the whole mind of the country was either subordinated to the most ignorant of priesthoods, or in a state of conscious impiety in the act of resistance. It appears strange that any enlightened person should have supposed that such a constitution as that of the United States could work well in Venezuela, on the instant of its severance from Spain, and with a Spanish priesthood spread over the whole province.

In July 1811, as has been related, the constitution was proclaimed. For a while all went well. The army was steady, commerce flourished, the people were contented. Throughout the autumn everybody was in spirits, unless it were that the agriculturists had some apprehensions of a dry season. In December the earth began to tremble, and the courage of the people was somewhat shaken. As the weeks went on, not a drop of rain fell within more than 300 miles from the capital. On Holy Thursday, the 26th of March 1812, almost the entire population was to be in the churches; and if no rain fell before that day, the whole people would pray, as with one voice, for rain. The sky remained cloudless, and on the great day the heat was excessive. At a few minutes after four, when the

churches were crowded, the bells clanged of their own accord; the pavement heaved under the people's feet, the steeples toppled and fell. There were two earthquakes at once; that is, the movements of the ground crossed each other. Nothing could stand this. The city of Caracas was almost entirely overthrown, and much of it buried. The clear moon of that night, which shone brilliantly when the dust had subsided, lighted up as dreary a scene as the earth ever presented. No food was to be had; the conduit pipes were snapped and crushed, and the springs choked up, and not a drop could be obtained for the dying who groaned out their entreaties for water. As the dead could not be buried, they were burned; and the yellow fires gleamed for many nights in the moonlight. The guilty confessed their sins aloud in the public ways; the licentious hastened to marry those whom they had seduced, and to acknowledge their illegitimate children; men of good fame avowed former frauds, and made restitution; enemies were reconciled. Such were the spectacles seen amidst the moral monstrosities which are always witnessed in such crises of panic and suffering, when the brutal and reckless come out into the light. The priests said that these acts of penitence and reparation were well, as far as they went, but they were not enough. The earthquake was a retributive infliction for the general sin of the community in setting up a constitution for itself. The Holy Thursday procession of two years before had been the occasion of the first talk of the new constitution; and here, on the same high festival, was the sign of the displeasure of Heaven. Aided by other influences, the event, and this preaching on it, availed to overthrow the new liberties of Venezuela. The Spanish troops pushed the advantage given by the panic of the people. Whole bodies of the patriot army went over to them. Bolivar failed to hold a fortress against them; and in July, Miranda agreed to a treaty which introduced the new Spanish constitution, in the place of that of Venezuela. This was the end of Miranda's career. The old patriot was seized in his bed by a party of political foes, of whom Bolivar was one, and put in irons, with the knowledge of the Spanish general, who took no pains to help him. After some months'

imprisonment in irons, he was sent to Spain, where he died in close captivity in 1816.

It is plain that there was no political enlightenment in Venezuela which could secure any stability. The country changed hands more than once, and was cruelly ravaged by each party in turn. Bolivar, as dictator, was dreadfully vindictive; and when he and his party were driven out of the country, and the patriots completely humbled, by the end of 1814, the Spanish rule was a mere system of barbarian pillage and oppression. During 1815 the patriots were quiet. In 1816, Bolivar and some comrades, driven out of New Grenada, were joined by volunteers from Great Britain and other European countries, and made an attempt at invasion, which was unsuccessful at the time. The struggle, which proved successful at last, was begun, with similar assistance, in January 1817. The conflict was maintained till 1823, when the last of the Spanish troops left the country. In 1819, Bolivar had freed New Grenada; and the two states were now united for a few years, till the inconvenience of their junction was found to outweigh its advantages. This is looking forward a little. In 1816, when, as we have seen, Mexico and New Grenada were humbled under the foot of the restored Ferdinand, Venezuela was in no better condition.

We must now see how matters stood in La Plata.

When the news arrived there of the French invasion of Spain, the viceroy of Rio de la Plata was the General Linières to whom Whitelocke had submitted the year before. Linières was a Frenchman, and in the interest of Napoleon; but he was soon superseded by a governor in the Spanish interest. He was afterwards executed, having been taken in arms against the patriot cause, which was, for a time, uppermost in 1810. After some vicissitudes, the Spanish flag was abolished in 1813, and coins were, for the first time, struck with the republican arms. Then followed a succession of Directors, whose presidency would, it was hoped, still the vibration of the passions. Their short terms of office seem to show, however, that the passions were still vibrating very strongly. In March 1816, the state of Rio de la Plata proclaimed, by the

mouth of its congress, its declaration of independence. General Pueyrredon was made the supreme Director. Here is one great state which was not under the foot of the restored Ferdinand in 1816.

The province of Paraguay managed matters very quietly. The people drove out the Spanish force sent against them when all La Plata was in commotion. In 1811, they deposed the Spanish government, and set up a junta, with Dr. Francia as secretary. In 1813, he was called consul; and in 1814, Dictator of Paraguay; and so he remained till his death in 1840—keeping his state independent at once of Buenos Ayres and of Spain, but under an excessive despotism from himself.

Chili accompanied the fortunes of La Plata. The Spanish authorities were early deposed; but the usual intrigues and factions among the patriots followed, and gave occasion for the Spanish forces, who were strong in Upper Peru, to come down, and attempt to regain the province. The Carreras were then at the head of the provincial affairs; and next, the well-known O'Higgins was made commander-in-chief. He so far reduced the Spaniards that a treaty, advantageous to Chili, was prepared under the mediation of a British officer then on the spot—Captain Hillyar. But the viceroy of Peru drew back from his promise to ratify the treaty; and war began again. The Spaniards conquered, and remained supreme in Chili from 1814 to 1816. La Plata could not acquiesce in this subjugation of the bordering province, though the mighty Andes rose between. General San Martin, who had been laid aside by sickness, recovered his health and energy, and made a wonderful passage of the mountain-chain in the month of January 1817. His little army crossed five ridges, terrible with ice and snow, besides many smaller ones—mules and horses, and even men, dropping dead in the cold. At the end of a fortnight, he was in fighting order on the other side. On the 12th of February, he gained a victory which secured the freedom of Chili.

In 1816, therefore, the Spanish rule was subsisting in Mexico, New Grenada, Venezuela, and Peru—all northern provinces. The great empire of Brazil was rising in its

fortunes, under the advantages of the royal residence—of its being made, in fact, the Portuguese empire from 1807. It had put out a hand to keep quiet the little province of Uruguay, at its southern extremity. The provinces which had declared their independence, and which were concluded to have republican tendencies and intentions, were La Plata and Chili. All the world knew that this was no permanent settlement. The northern provinces would not remain tranquil under the old colonial rule; and it was not probable that Spain would acquiesce in the independence of the southern states. It was a matter, not only of curiosity and interest what would happen next, but of serious political importance to the governments of Europe. Some of them, and Great Britain for one, must take some part in promoting or opposing the independence of the Spanish colonies of South America; and no British statesman was likely to forget that assurance of Mr. Pitt, in 1790, which was always in Canning's mind—that the scheme of emancipating South America was one which would not be lost sight of, but would infallibly engage the attention of every minister of our country

CHAPTER IX.

Opening of Parliament—Outrage on the Prince-regent—Alarm—Reports of Secret Committees—March of the Blanketeers—Derby Insurrection.

ON the 28th of January, the prince-regent opened the fifth session of the existing parliament. The speech from the throne contained the following passage: 'In considering our internal situation you will, I doubt not, feel a just indignation at the attempts which have been made to take advantage of the distresses of the country, for the purpose of exciting a spirit of sedition and violence. I am too well convinced of the loyalty and good sense of the great body of His Majesty's subjects, to believe them capable of being perverted by the arts which are employed to seduce them; but I am determined to omit no precau-

of such a personage.' With a real admiration of many points in the character of this 'personage,' we cannot but regard the period in which he was a mere gleaner in the harvest of alarm as the least creditable portion of his life. He had been excluded from power for three years. He returned to jealous colleagues and to bitter rivals. He could not exist out of the circle of party. Rather than not win the equivocal honours of a partisan, he was content to be a tool. When Canning, on the second night of the debate on the address, denied that the existing state of the representation was a grievance; when he said: 'I deny the assumption that the House of Commons, as it stands, is not, to all practical purposes, an adequate representation of the people; I deny that it requires any amendment or alteration;' he spoke, we have no doubt, his honest convictions. But when he attempted, as he did in the same speech, to confound the most moderate projects of reform with the doctrines of universal suffrage and annual parliaments, and mixed up the whole body of propounders of these doctrines with the mad fanatics called Spenceans, we lament to see a great mind prostituting its talents to such dishonest advocacy. He was thrust forward to play a part, and he so played it that he brought down his fine genius to the level of those under whom he served. But the policy was successful. It was in preparation for the message of the 3rd of February, that the prince-regent had given orders that there be laid before the Houses, 'papers containing information respecting certain practices, meetings, and combinations in the metropolis, and in different parts of the kingdom, evidently calculated to endanger the public tranquillity, to alienate the affections of His Majesty's subjects from His Majesty's person and government, and to bring into hatred and contempt the whole system of our laws and institutions.' In moving the order of the day for the consideration of this message, Lord Sidmouth, in the House of Lords, affirmed that the communication was in no degree founded on, or connected with, the outrage upon the prince-regent on the first day of the session. And yet the House of Lords saw the attack upon the prince-regent as 'an additional and melancholy proof of the efficacy of this

system [the system complained of in the message] to destroy all reverence for authority.' It is difficult to imagine that so serious a charge against a large portion of the people, as that made in the message of the 3rd of February, should have been so lightly passed over in the royal speech of the 28th of January, had not some new circumstances arisen to warrant the course which the government was now taking. Was it that the fears of the illustrious personage who had heard the upbraiding groans of the multitude, and had sustained a rude insult from some reckless hand, had urged his ministers upon the career which they were now entering, of exaggerating discontents, of tempting distress into sedition, of sowing suspicion of the poor in the minds of the rich, of confounding the reformer and the anarchist in one general hatred? One of the keenest of political reasoners speaks of sovereigns, who, 'neglecting all virtuous actions, began to believe that princes were exalted for no other end but to discriminate themselves from their subjects by their pomp, luxury, and all other effeminate qualities; by which means they fell into the hatred of the people, and by consequence became afraid of them, and that fear increasing, they began to meditate revenge.' Up to a certain point, we are constrained to believe that this temper was something akin to that of the regent in those unhappy days. It is well that the genius of our constitution rendered this temper comparatively powerless.

The message of the prince-regent of the 3d of February was referred to a secret committee in each House, and these committees made their reports on the 18th and 19th of the same month. We have already noticed that portion of the report of the Lords which describes 'the traitorous conspiracy,' which was developed in the riot at Spa-fields. One third of the report is devoted to a narrative of this riot, and the designs of its miserable abettors, in terms of the most fearful solemnity. Not Cicero's denunciations of Catiline are more horror-stirring. The report then proceeds to detail the general state of the country. 'It appears clearly that the object is, by means of societies or clubs, established, or to be established, in all parts of Great Britain, under pretence of parliamentary reform, to

infect the minds of all classes of the community, and particularly of those whose situation most exposes them to such impressions, with a spirit of discontent and disaffection, of insubordination, and contempt of all law, religion, and morality, and to hold out to them the plunder of all property as the main object of their efforts, and the restoration of their natural rights; and no endeavours are omitted to prepare them to take up arms on the first signal for accomplishing their designs.' . . . 'The country societies are principally to be found in, and in the neighbourhood of Leicester, Loughborough, Nottingham, Mansfield, Derby, Sheffield, Blackburn, Manchester, Birmingham, and Norwich, and in Glasgow and its vicinity; but they extend and are spreading in some parts of the country to almost every village.' The report finally calls for 'further provision for the preservation of the public peace, and for the protection of interests in which the happiness of every class of the community is deeply and equally involved.' The report of the House of Commons begins with the Spencean societies, and goes on to describe, at greater length than that of the Lords, the Spa-fields conspiracy. The Hampden Clubs are most emphatically denounced as aiming at 'nothing short of a revolution.' The report of the Commons thus concludes: 'Your committee cannot contemplate the activity and arts of the leaders in this conspiracy, and the numbers whom they have already seduced and may seduce; the oaths by which many of them are bound together; the means suggested and prepared for the forcible attainment of their objects; the nature of the objects themselves, which are not only the overthrow of all the political institutions of the kingdom, but also such a subversion of the rights and principles of property as must necessarily lead to general confusion, plunder, and bloodshed; without submitting to the most serious attention of the House the dangers which exist, and which the utmost vigilance of government, under the existing laws, has been found inadequate to prevent.' Looking at these reports in connection with the facts which were subsequently brought to light, under the most solemn judicial investigations conducted in the spirit of the constitution, and

under the extra-judicial powers which were granted for the detection and punishment of guilt, we must either come to the conclusion that the committees were the dupes of blind or wicked informers, or were unable to arrive at a sound judgment upon the facts presented to them, or were not unwilling to spread a panic which would leave parliament for an indefinite time to its ordinary struggles for the interests of particular classes, to the comparative neglect of the welfare of the great body of the people. But, under the influence of these reports, it would have been impossible to have made such a resistance to the government as would have prevented the enactment of stringent measures, one of which was decidedly unconstitutional. Bills were brought in and passed by large majorities, to guard against and avert the dangers which had been so alarmingly proclaimed. The first of these renewed the act for the prevention and punishment of attempts to seduce soldiers and sailors from their allegiance; the second extended to the prince-regent all the safeguards against treasonable attempts which secure the actual sovereign; the third was for the prevention of seditious meetings. The last of the four was the most dangerous and the least called for. It gave to the executive power the fearful right of imprisonment without trial. In common parlance, the Habeas Corpus Act was suspended, under 'An Act to empower His Majesty to secure and detain such persons as His Majesty shall suspect are conspiring against his person and government.' The suspension was, however, in this instance, limited to the ensuing 1st of July.

The Habeas Corpus Suspension Act was passed on the 3rd of March; the bill for restraining seditious meetings did not become law till the 29th of March. Within a week after the passing of the act for imprisonment without trial, and before the magistrates had received any accession to their power as to the dispersion of tumultuous assemblies, an occurrence took place at Manchester, which was at once evidence of the agitated condition of distressed multitudes in the manufacturing districts, and of the extreme weakness of their purposes. This was the famous march of the Blanketeers. And yet, when the renewed

suspension of the Habeas Corpus Act was proposed in June, the report of the secret committee entered into minute detail of this senseless project, as one of the arguments for tampering again with the liberties of the whole kingdom. A plain and honest account of this affair is given by Samuel Bamford. According to his narrative, William Benbow, the shoemaker, had taken a great share in getting up and arranging a vast meeting, subsequently called the Blanket Meeting, for the purpose of marching to London to petition the prince-regent in person. Bamford himself wholly condemned the measure. He deprecated the blind zeal of those who had proposed it; he believed they were instigated by those who would betray them. Up to this time the maxim of the reformers had been: 'Hold fast by the laws.' New doctrines now began to be broached, which, if not in direct violation of the law, were ill-disguised subterfuges for its evasion. The Blanket Meeting, however, took place in St. Peter's Field at Manchester. It consisted, according to Bamford, of four or five thousand operatives—according to the second report of the Lords' secret committee, of ten or twelve thousand. 'Many of the individuals,' says Bamford, 'were observed to have blankets, rugs, or large coats, rolled up and tied knapsack-like on their backs; some carried bundles under their arms; some had papers, supposed to be petitions, rolled up; and some had stout walking-sticks.' The magistrates came upon the field and read the riot act; the meeting was dispersed by the military and constables; three hundred commenced a straggling march, followed by a body of yeomanry, and a hundred and eighty reached Macclesfield at nine o'clock at night. Some were apprehended, some lay in the fields. The next morning the numbers had almost melted away; 'about a score arrived at Leek, and six only were known to pass Ashbourne Bridge.' More terrible events, however, were in preparation. According to the second report of the Lords' secret committee: 'it was on the night of the 30th of March that a general insurrection was intended to have commenced at Manchester. The magistrates were to be seized; the prisoners were to be liberated; the soldiers were either to be surprised in their

barracks, or a certain number of factories were to be set on fire, for the purpose of drawing the soldiers out of their barracks, of which a party stationed near them for that object were then to take possession, with a view of seizing the magazine.' . . . 'This atrocious conspiracy was detected by the vigilance of the magistrates, and defeated by the apprehension and confinement of some of the ringleaders a few days before the period fixed for its execution.' Bamford records, that on the day after the Blanket Meeting, 'a man dressed much like a dyer' came to him at Middleton, 'to propose that in consequence of the treatment which the Blanketeers had received at the meeting and afterwards, "a Moscow of Manchester" should take place that very night.' Bamford and his friends dismissed him with the assurance that he was the dupe of some designing villain. The scheme which this dupe or scoundrel propounded was exactly that described in the Lords' report. But there were men who did not receive this proposal with disgust and suspicion, as those of Middleton did. The avowed reform-leaders—delegates and Hampden-club men—were under perpetual terror. Some wandered from their homes in dread of imprisonment; others were seized in the bosom of their families. Public meetings were at an end. The fears and passions of large bodies of men had no safety-valve. 'Open meetings thus being suspended, secret ones ensued; they were originated at Manchester, and assembled under various pretexts. . . . Their real purpose, divulged only to the initiated, was to carry into effect the night-attack on Manchester, the attempt at which had before failed for want of arrangement and co-operation.' A little while after this 'Moscow' proposal, a co-delegate came to Bamford, to propose the assassination of all the ministers. We know that this scheme smouldered for several years. 'The fact was,' says Bamford, 'this unfortunate person, in the confidence of an unsuspecting mind, as I believe, had during one of his visits to London formed a connection with Oliver, the spy—which connection, during several succeeding months, gave a new impulse to secret meetings and plots in various parts of Lancashire, Yorkshire, and Derbyshire; and ended in the tragedy of

Brandroth, Ludlow, and Turner, at Derby.' The course of this tragedy we have now to recount. It is the only one of the insurrectionary movements of the manufacturing districts, in 1817, that has left any traces of judicial investigation, with the exception of proceedings at York, at which all the state-prisoners were discharged by the grand jury, or acquitted upon trial. All the persons connected with the Blanket expedition, and the expected risings at Manchester, were discharged before trial.

The midland counties of Nottingham, Leicester, and Derby, had been in a disturbed state for several years. The habit of daring outrage was familiar to large numbers of the manufacturing population. We have already exhibited that course of ignorant and brutal violence, known as Luddism. On the 23rd of July 1817, Mr. Ponsonby described this system, as one that had not originated in political principles; but he expressed his belief that those who had been trained to mischief by its laws had mixed themselves with those who had political objects in view, and that from them had proceeded some of the most atrocious suggestions for the disturbance of the public peace. At the Leicester assizes on the 1st of April, eight men were tried and convicted of the most daring outrages at Loughborough, and six of these offenders were executed on the 17th of the same month. There was not the slightest attempt at this trial to connect the crimes of these men with any political opinions. But amongst a population that for four years had witnessed the night-attacks of armed men upon machinery, and with whom some of the leaders of such organised attacks were in habitual intercourse, it is manifest that the materials for political insurrection were abundantly accumulated. It was not the part of a wise and humane government to permit the feeblest spark of excitement from without to approach these inflammable materials. We do not think that the facts which time has revealed warrant us in going so far as Sir Samuel Romilly, who in his place in parliament declared, on the 27th of January 1818, that in his conscience he believed the whole of the Derbyshire insurrection was the work of the persons sent by government; but we do think that these facts justify a strong

conviction that without the agency of these persons the insurrection would not have taken place. On the motion for the first reading of the bill for continuing the suspension of the Habeas Corpus, on the 23rd of June, Mr. Ponsonby, who had been a member of the secret committee, but had dissented from the majority as to the necessity of the further suspension, stated to the House 'some of the information gained from the papers and evidence presented to the committee.' In March, a person calling himself a delegate came to London from one of the midland districts, and was introduced to one of similar opinions. He of similar opinions gave discouraging information as to the state of public feeling in the capital. The representations of the delegate as to the impatience of the country districts 'to throw off the yoke,' as he termed it, were not responded to. But he met two other persons ready to return with him as delegates from London; and Mr. Oliver proposed to go along with them, making a fourth delegate. Before they proceeded on their journey, Oliver was in communication with the Home Office; but received no instructions to compromise the safety of any one by tempting them into practices which he afterwards exposed. The co-delegates relied fully on Oliver—the country delegate introduced him to all his friends as a second self. Oliver remained among these people from the 17th of April to the 27th of May, everywhere received as the London delegate. He was examined before the secret committee, and told them he was very shy of giving information; what he said was, that 'London was ready to rise, and only wished to know what assistance could be derived from the country; and that the people of London would not stir first, but would be ready to second any movement from the country. His friend, the country delegate, gave effect to this information, by telling his brethren, the country delegates, that 75,000 individuals could be relied on in the eastern parts of the capital, and 75,000 in the western. Mr. Ponsonby thus showed, with a moderation and candour most advantageously contrasted with the frenzied declamations against individual members of the government, made by such popularity-hunters as Sir Francis Burdett and Mr.

Grey Bennett, that the representations of Oliver himself, and the representations which he permitted to be made with his knowledge and approval, did excite the wretched individuals with whom the spy-delegate and the dupe-delegate conversed, to acts of rebellion or insubordination. But Mr. Ponsonby only traced Oliver to the 27th of May. We are now enabled to follow his course up to the moment of the Derbyshire insurrection. On the 6th of June an outbreak in Yorkshire was expected, and ten delegates were arrested at Thornhill-lees, near Dewsbury. On the day of the meeting, Oliver called on Mr. Willans, a bookseller of Dewsbury, and urged him to attend the meeting of delegates at Thornhill-lees. He had two months before addressed Willans in the most traitorous language. Willans, having some suspicion of the incendiary, refused to go. Oliver himself attended the meeting, and was arrested with the others; but in the evening he was at large in Wakefield, and, entering the coach to go to Leeds, was accosted by a livery servant of Sir John Byng, who commanded the forces in the disturbed districts. This servant, after Oliver was gone, said that a few days before he had driven him in a gig from his master's house to meet a coach. These circumstances were discovered by the activity of Mr. Baines, of Leeds, who published them in his influential newspaper; and they formed the subject of a violent debate in the House of Commons on the 16th of June. In a work of considerable historical importance, which appeared in February 1847, and to which we shall have occasion frequently to refer, this particular transaction was minutely gone into, for the purpose of justifying Lord Sidmouth, as secretary of state for the home department, against the imputations which arose out of the employment of such persons as Oliver. 'None of them,' says the author, 'were employed in the first instance by Lord Sidmouth, but themselves sought him out: and if, which is not probable, they in any instances instigated the conspirators to crime, in order to betray them, the treacherous act must have been entirely their own; as nothing would have excited more his lordship's indignation than the bare idea of so base a proceeding.' The Dean of Norwich has obtained

stay, at last, to lessen their suspicions.' Of this meeting at Nottingham on the 7th of June, the trials of the Derby traitors convey no record. All evidence was suppressed of any circumstances prior to the 8th of June. We have now to follow the course of these remarkable trials, with the certainty that the spy of government was at the meeting of the 7th of June, at which this outbreak was organised, and with a tolerably clear conviction, as will become more evident, that the unhappy agents in this insurrection were acted upon by the most extraordinary delusions from without. The defence of the suspension of the Habeas Corpus was, that the leaders of a conspiracy might be seized so as to prevent an outbreak. The peace preservers of Nottingham on the 7th of June induced the government spy to attend a meeting of supposed conspirators, for the purpose of giving them the necessary information. If they had acted upon that information by arresting the conspirators, the Derby insurrection would have been crushed in the egg. The expression of Mr. Allsop, 'it was explicitly decided' that no encouragement should be given by the spy, assumes a discussion previous to the decision. Where there are clear and honest intentions alone, it is not necessary explicitly to decide against the adoption of a treacherous and disgraceful line of conduct.

On Sunday, the 8th of June, there was a remarkable assemblage at Pentridge, a village situated some two miles from the Ambergate station, on the present North Midland Railway. The village is in the hilly and thinly peopled district to the west of the river Derwent. In the neighbourhood of Pentridge there are several other scattered villages—all not far removed from a direct road to Nottingham. About a mile from Pentridge, at Butterley, was a large iron-foundry. Two men in the employ of the proprietors of this foundry went into the White Horse public-house, at Pentridge, on the morning of the 8th of June, and found a good many persons in the parlour there, 'talking about this revolution.' There was one amongst them they called 'The Captain.' He had a map in his hand, and the people came in, and kept asking him questions; and he said, there would be no good to be done

been pronounced. Four were transported for fourteen years; and five were imprisoned for various terms.

There is one piece of evidence connected with these transactions which the Dean of Norwich has overlooked—the evidence of Samuel Bamford, a poor weaver, but a man of considerable talent and unquestionable honesty—a man who has now a keen sense of his early mistakes, and a conviction that ‘no redemption for the masses can exist, save one that should arise from their own virtue and knowledge.’ Bamford was arrested on a suspicion of high treason, and was delivered to the custody of the king’s messengers on the 30th of March, who conveyed him from Manchester to London. He was five times examined before the Privy Council; and he describes these examinations as being conducted by Lord Sidmouth with the greatest patience and kindness. He was finally discharged on the 30th of April. Soon after Bamford’s return to Middleton, he found that private meetings had been held in his absence, and suspicious intrigues carried on; that Joseph Mitchell, an old acquaintance, and a stranger, were the chief movers in these proceedings. One day, there came to him an old man, who had been his co-delegate to London from Derby, and a tall decent-looking young man, much like a town’s weaver. The old man said a delegate meeting was to be held in Yorkshire, which would cause a finishing blow to be levelled at the borough-mongers; and that a man from Middleton, whose name he gave, and who had attended several previous meetings, was particularly wanted on the present occasion—concluding by asking Bamford to direct him to that man. Bamford suspected mischief, and pretended not to know such a man. He was suspicious of the designs of the stranger, who had been about Middleton, and had even inquired for him after his discharge. Bamford advised the old man to pause; but he ‘huffed at the advice.’ The old man was Thomas Bacon, one of those who were arraigned at Derby, and transported for life; the young man was William Turner, who was executed with Brandreth and Ludlam. Bamford thus concludes this narrative: ‘The *stranger* whom Joseph Mitchell had so assiduously introduced amongst the discontented classes of Lancashire, Yorkshire, and Derbyshire, first inveigled

them into treasonable associations, then to armaly were not tions, and then betrayed them. That stranger, ~~an~~ Lord trayer, reader, was Oliver, the spy.'

The acquittal of Watson, for high treason, took place on the 16th of June. It appears to have had no influence on the measures of government. The second suspension of the Habeas Corpus was passed by large majorities in both Houses; and the prince-regent, in his speech closing this session on the 12th of July, averred that 'a favourable change was happily taking place in the internal situation of the country, which was to be mainly ascribed to the salutary measures which parliament had adopted for procuring the public tranquillity.' The private records of Lord Sidmouth's life show that he had no great confidence in 'the favourable change.' At the end of July, Lord Sidmouth established his family at Malvern, intending to remain there a short time himself '*and then back*,' as he said, '*to sedition and treason again*;' his under-secretary being left in charge during the interim. Before his lordship's departure, however, as he informed his brother on the 20th, he 'revised all the cases of persons committed and detained under the Suspension Act; and the result, he trusted, would be the release of some upon their own recognizance, and increased indulgence to those who could not be released.' How stands the balance, then, of 'sedition and treason,' on the part of the people, and 'the salutary measures for preserving the public tranquillity,' on the part of the government? Watson was acquitted of high treason, alleged against him for his absurd and guilty participation in the Spa-fields riots which formed so important a matter of the first reports of the secret committee. Three others of the Spa-fields conspirators indicted with him were discharged; the younger Watson had eluded all pursuit. The persons imprisoned in Edinburgh Castle and Glasgow jail on the charge of treason, seventeen in number, were set at liberty in July, receiving seven shillings each to carry them home. The Yorkshire insurrection thus terminated. 'The trials of the state prisoners, as they have been called, closed at York this day August 22nd; and of the twenty-four persons against whom the government solicitor was instructed to institute prosecutions, ten have

CHAPTER X.

Prosecutions for Libel—Hone's Trials.

On moving the second reading of the Habeas Corpus Suspension Bill, Lord Sidmouth made the following statement. 'Some noble lords had complained that prosecutions had not been instituted against the authors, printers, or publishers of infamous libels; but it was but justice to government to state, that they had not neglected their duty with regard to these publications. As soon as they reached the hands of ministers, they were transmitted to the law-officers of the crown, who felt that these publications were drawn up with so much dexterity—the authors had so profited by former lessons of experience—that greater difficulties to conviction presented themselves than at any former time.' Within a month from this declaration Lord Sidmouth intrusted the administration of the law of libel to less scrupulous hands than the law-officers of the crown. On the 27th of March, the secretary of state addressed his famous circular-letter to the lords-lieutenant of counties, in which, urging the importance of preventing the circulation of blasphemous and seditious pamphlets, he stated that he had obtained the opinion of the law-officers, that 'a justice of the peace may issue a warrant to apprehend a person charged before him, upon oath, with the publication of libels of the nature in question, and compel him to give bail to answer the charge.' He called, therefore, upon the lords-lieutenant to communicate this opinion at the ensuing quarter-sessions, so that all magistrates might act thereupon. Such a proceeding as this was perhaps the most daring invasion of public liberty that had been attempted since the time of the Stuarts. It called forth from Lord Grey, on the 12th of May, one of the most luminous speeches which that statesman ever delivered. One passage may be fitly quoted: 'In all the varieties of writing which

may constitute the offence of libel, what is more difficult to be decided than the question of their guilt or innocence? What more exposed to the influence of undue motives in its decision? It has been formerly stated, by some of the most eminent persons in the profession of the law, nay, by almost all of them, to be so nice and difficult a question, that it could not be safely left even to a special jury; that they were only to find the fact of publication; and that the criminality of the writing as a question of law, was exclusively for the decision of the court. This, my lords, was long contended for, and long acted upon as law; till, happily for the freedom of the press, and for the liberty of the country, of which the press is the great palladium, by the perseverance of my noble and learned friend (Lord Erskine), and by the exertions of the man whom, in public life, I most loved and admired (Mr. Fox), that principle was at length exploded; and by the Libel Bill it was at last established, that in prosecutions for libel, both the law and the fact were within the province of the jury, and to be determined by them. But, my lords, what avails this just and beneficent statute—what security is there either for the freedom of the press, or the liberty of the subject—if, whilst you have imposed this salutary restraint upon the judges in trials for libel, you give to them, and to justices of the peace, before trial, a right to decide that difficult question; and to commit to prison—in many instances, perhaps, to inflict a severer punishment than the court upon conviction would adjudge—upon a charge which, after all, may turn out to have had no foundation, but in the false interpretation of words perfectly innocent, by the justice before whom the charge was brought? If such be the power of the magistrate, and if this be the law, where, I ask, are all the boasted securities of our independence and freedom?’ The House of Lords was indifferent to the preservation of these boasted securities. Writing, four months after this debate, to the Bishop of Durham, Lord Sidmouth says, ‘The attempt to check the progress of treason and blasphemy, by apprising the magistrates that they had the power of apprehending and holding to bail the publishers or vendors of either, was one of the charges brought against me in the course of the last

... and happy in consequence. . . . these
 . . . that the activity of the itinerant . . . these
 . . . articles is materially controlled, and their number greatly
 diminished.' We apprehend that there cannot be the
 slightest doubt in most minds, at the present day, that
 this proceeding of Lord Sidmouth was most unconstitutional;
 and that he speaks and writes in defence of his
 conduct, with all the self-approval of the worst political
 bigot of the worst periods of tyranny. Truly did Sir
 Samuel Romilly say, in the discussion of the same question:
 'By the constitution of this country there are only two
 modes in which the law, in matters of doubt, can be
 declared: one is, by the whole legislature, by a declaratory
 statute; the other, by the decisions of the judges upon
 points which have come judicially before them. It has
 been at all times thought of the utmost importance to
 prevent the law from being in any other way declared,
 and particularly to guard against the crown presuming to
 declare it. . . . The circular, resting on the opinion of
 the law-officers, had declared the laws of the land on a
 point that was before doubtful; and the secretary of state,
 assisted by such advice as he could command, had thus
 assumed the functions of legislation.'

It is difficult to imagine a more degraded and dangerous
 position than that in which every political writer was
 placed during the year 1817. In the first place, he was
 subject, by a secretary of state's warrant, to be imprisoned
 upon suspicion, under the Suspension of the Habeas
 Corpus Act. Secondly, he was open to an *ex-officio* in-
 formation, under which he would be compelled to find
 bail, or be imprisoned. This power was extended so as to
 compel bail, by an act of 1808; but from 1808 to 1811,
 during which three years forty such informations were
 laid, only one person was held to bail. In 1817 numerous
ex-officio informations were filed, and the almost invariable
 practice was to hold the alleged offender to bail, or in
 default to commit to prison. Under this act Mr. Hone
 and others were committed to prison during this year.
 To complete this triple cord with which the ministers
 believed they could bind down the 'man-mountain' of the

may constitute the offence of libel, what is more difficult to be decided than the *accusings* was a sign of guilt or innocence? was a more extraordinary instance of success—William *lives* in ran away. On the 28th of March he fled to America, suspending the publication of his *Register* for four months. In his farewell paper he thus explains his motive for this new *Hegira*: ‘Lord Sidmouth was “sorry to say” that I had not written anything that the law-officers could prosecute with any chance of success. I do not remove for the purpose of writing libels, but for the purpose of being able to write what is not libellous. I do not retire from the combat with the attorney-general, but from a combat with a dungeon, deprived of pen, ink, and paper. A combat with the attorney-general is quite unequal enough. That, however, I would have encountered. I know too well what a trial by special jury is. Yet that, or any sort of trial, I would have stayed to face. So that I could be sure of a trial of whatever sort, I would have run the risk. But, against the absolute power of imprisonment without even a hearing, for time unlimited, in any jail in the kingdom, without the use of pen, ink, and paper, and without any communication with any soul but the keepers—against such a power it would have been worse than madness to attempt to strive.’ It may be easy to call this apprehension cowardice; but there can be no doubt that Cobbett was the most dreaded of all the political writers of that time, by those who were terrified at the name of parliamentary reform. They were especially in fear of those of whose ‘dexterity’ Lord Sidmouth complained. Cobbett went unscathed. The terrors of the law were reserved for more incautious and feebler delinquents.

On the 12th of May, Earl Grey mentioned in the House of Lords that a Mr. Hone was proceeded against for publishing some blasphemous parody; but he had read one of the same nature, written, printed, and published some years ago by other people, without any notice having been officially taken of it. The parody to which Earl Grey alluded, and a portion of which he recited, was Canning’s famous parody, ‘Praise Lepaux’—an imitation of the *Benedicite*, and of passages in *Job*—which was published in the *Anti-Jacobin*; and he asked whether the

day indicted for publishing an impious and profane libel, called *The Litany, or General Supplication*. Again the attorney-general affirmed that whatever might be the object of the defendant, the publication had the effect of scoffing at the public service of the church. Again the defendant essayed to read from his books, which course he contended was essentially necessary for his defence. Then began a contest which is perhaps unparalleled in an English court of justice. Upon Mr. Fox's Libel Bill, upon *ex-officio* informations, upon his right to copies of the indictment without extravagant charges, the defendant battled his judge—imperfect in his law, no doubt, but with a firmness and moderation that rode over every attempt to put him down. Parody after parody was again produced, and especially those parodies of the litany which the Cavaliers employed so frequently as vehicles of satire upon the Roundheads and Puritans. The lord chief-justice at length gathered up his exhausted strength for his charge; and concluded in a strain that left but little hope for the defendant: 'He would deliver the jury his solemn opinion, as he was required by act of parliament to do; and under the authority of that act, and still more in obedience to his conscience and his God, he pronounced this to be a most impious and profane libel. Believing and hoping that they, the jury, were Christians, he had not any doubt but that they would be of the same opinion.' The jury, in an hour and a half, returned a verdict of Not Guilty.

It might have been expected that these prosecutions would have here ended. But the chance of a conviction from a third jury, upon a third indictment, was to be risked. On the 20th of December, Lord Ellenborough again took his seat on the bench, and the exhausted defendant came late into court, pale and agitated. The attorney-general remarked upon his appearance, and offered to postpone the proceedings. The courageous man made his election to go on. This third indictment was for publishing a parody on the creed of St. Athanasius, called *The Sinecurist's Creed*. After the attorney-general had finished his address, Mr. Hone asked for five minutes' delay, to arrange the few thoughts he had been commit-

ting to paper. The judge refused the small concession; but said that he would postpone the proceedings to another day, if the defendant would request the court so to do. The scene which ensued was thoroughly dramatic. 'No! I make no such request. My lord, I am very glad to see your lordship here to-day, because I feel I sustained an injury from your lordship yesterday—an injury which I did not expect to sustain. . . . If his lordship should think proper, on this trial to-day, to deliver his opinion, I hope that opinion will be coolly and dispassionately expressed by his lordship. . . . My lord, I think it necessary to make a stand here. I cannot say what your lordship may consider to be necessary interruption; but your lordship interrupted me a great many times yesterday, and then said you would interrupt me no more, and yet your lordship did interrupt me afterwards ten times as much. . . . Gentlemen, it is you who are trying me to-day. His lordship is no judge of me. You are my judges, and you only are my judges. His lordship sits there to receive your verdict. . . . I will not say what his lordship did yesterday; but I trust his lordship to-day will give his opinion coolly and dispassionately, without using either expression or gesture which could be construed as conveying an entreaty to the jury to think as he did. I hope the jury will not be beseeched into a verdict of guilty.' The triumph of the weak over the powerful was complete. 'The frame of adamant and soul of fire,' as the biographer of Lord Sidmouth terms the chief-justice, quailed before the indomitable courage of a man who was roused into energies which would seem only to belong to the master-spirits that have swayed the world. Yet this was a man who, in the ordinary business of life, was incapable of enterprise and persevering exertion; who lived in the nooks and corners of his antiquarianism; who was one that even his old political opponents came to regard as a gentle and innocuous hunter after 'all such reading as was never read; who in a few years gave up his politics altogether, and, devoting himself to his old poetry and his old divinity, passed a quarter of a century after this conflict in peace with all mankind, and died the sub-editor of a religious journal. It was towards the close of

Wilberforce says: 'I continue friendly to the moderate, gradual, and almost insensibly operating parliamentary reform, which was last brought forward by Mr. Pitt. I am firmly persuaded that at present a prodigious majority of the more intelligent people of this country are adverse to the measure. In my view, so far from being an objection to the discussion, this is rather a recommendation of it. But it is a serious and very strong objection to its present consideration, that the efforts of certain demagogues have had too much success in influencing the minds of the lowest of the people in several of our manufacturing districts, most falsely persuading them that the evils under which we at present labour are owing to the state of our parliamentary representation, and that they would be cured by a parliamentary reform.' The rash movements of the operative classes in 1816—their violent declamations, their tumultuous meetings—proceeded in most cases from an ignorant but honest spirit. They had been taught, as some demagogues still continue to teach, that all the evils of civilisation are political evils. A few scoundrels, a few spies, and a few zealots of the operative class, placed the weapon of alarm in the hands of the government of 1817; and, what was more, laid the foundation for those miserable conflicts and mutual suspicions, on the part of the capitalists and the labourers, which are still amongst the most serious obstacles to all large mitigations of the inequalities of society, however we may all be improved in the common wish for Christian brotherhood.

CHAPTER XII.*

India—Pindarree War—Mahratta Wars.

THE period at which we are arrived was remarkable for a series of achievements in India, under the administration of the Marquis of Hastings, at that time Earl of Moira. His lordship was nominated governor-general on the 18th of November 1812, and, arriving in India, Lord Minto resigned the government to him on the 4th of October 1813. He was obliged to attend almost immediately to matters of war, for the Birmans, or Burmese, continued to trouble one of the frontiers of our empire, while the Nepaulese made encroachments on another. The Birmans were brought to reason for the present; but the Nepaulese spurned negotiation, and were to be reduced only by force. The Goorkhas, who domineered over a great part of Nepaul, retained that passion for war and conquest to which they owed their recently established dominion, and by which they hoped to extend their empire in Hindostan. Their far-extended frontier pressed everywhere upon the territories of the Company, or the territory of the Company's allies or dependents; and except in the neighbourhood of our military stations, it was found difficult or almost impossible to check the border forays of the Nepaulese, or the quarrels that were constantly breaking out. In the month of May 1814, while some negotiations were still pending, the Nepaulese treacherously attacked and murdered all the police-officers stationed in Bootwul. The Earl of Moira determined to send armies to deal with these troublesome neighbours, and, after two campaigns, they were effectually subdued.

In the meanwhile our Indian armies were drawn into the field by new enemies. The Pindarrees were not a

* This chapter is abridged from Mr. MacFarlane's able work, *Our Indian Empire*.

unreduced strength of his armies in the accomplishment of the important object of securing the peace of Central India by the extirpation of the robbers. He had written for the sanction of the home authorities, and had made a second strong representation of the horrors to which the country was exposed; but the sanction he required before commencing operations on a grand scale had not yet arrived. A large part of the Bengal army was, however, kept in advanced cantonments, ready to take the field at any moment. The governor-general at length received the sanction of the home authorities to his scheme for breaking up the confederacy and power of those banditti.

By the end of October 1816, Lieutenant-colonel Walker took up a defensive line on the southern bank of the Nerbudda, with the main body of the subsidiary force which the Company had sent into Nagpoor. This defensive line, being nearly one hundred and fifty miles in length, was loose and weak; but the first appearance of a British army in the valley of the Nerbudda spread consternation among the robbers, and induced Cheetoo to prepare to quit the northern bank of that river, and cross the mountains into Malwah. Perceiving, however, that the troops did not cross the Nerbudda, the Pindarrees recovered confidence; and on the 4th of November they resolved to push small parties between Colonel Walker's posts and round his flanks; and a party crossed the river, and then dividing into two, took different directions. Colonel Walker in attempting to intercept one of the divisions, unexpectedly fell upon the other as it was bivouacking in a jungle; he inflicted some loss; but the nimble robbers were soon in the saddle, and before long they had recrossed the river. On the 13th of November all the durras were in motion. Cheetoo had discovered that Walker's cavalry was all on his left flank, and he therefore threw forward more than five thousand of his well-mounted thieves to turn Walker's right flank. This band, which appears to have been followed by others, crossed the river in sight of the infantry post on the extreme right of our line, and then dashed on with a rapidity which left our infantry no chance of stopping or harassing their march. When collected on the southern side of the Nerbudda, the Pin-

darrees separated into two great bodies. One swept due east, though forests and over mountains, and fell unexpectedly upon the Company's district of Ganjam, the northernmost frontier of the five Circars, with the evident intention of proceeding to Cuttack and Juggernaut, to plunder the rich stronghold of Hindoo superstition, to carry off the idols and the votive-offerings and rich donations of the pilgrims and devotees. But this lubbur was met by a small body of the Company's troops almost as soon as it entered Ganjam, and was driven back with considerable loss. The other lubbur, which had gone off to the southward, rushed into the Nizam's territory before Colonel Doveton could come up with it. It then marched leisurely along, plundering and destroying, until it came near to the town of Beeder, the capital of a province of the Deccan, and about 73 miles north-west from Hyderabad. Here it came to a halt, and its chiefs disagreed as to the further course which ought to be pursued. While the leaders were in this state of indecision, Major Macdowall, who had been detached from Hyderabad, fell upon the lubbur by night with the van party of his light troops, and cut it up completely, although it was six thousand strong, and the first attack made by a mere handful of light cavalry. The robbers abandoned most of their horses and the greater part of their booty, dispersed themselves over the country, and thought of nothing but their personal safety, and of the means of returning to the northern side of the Nerbudda. But one leader, named Sheik Dulloo, indignant at the want of energy and concert betrayed by those who had the chief command, had abandoned this lubbur altogether a few days before Macdowall's exploit, and had gone off with from three to five hundred Pindarrees to act for himself. He dashed across the Peishwa's territory, descended into the Concan, and thence shaped his course due north, plundering the western shores of India, from the 17th to the 21st degree of north latitude, and returning by the valley of the Tapti, and the route of Burhaunpore, the capital of the Khandeish province of the Deccan. This was the only lubbur that met with any success this season. The only loss it sustained from British troops was on its return to the Ner-

Grasseas, as he had so often the English, and for a short time wandered and skulked about Malwah with some two hundred followers. When in this state of hopeless misery, he was often advised by some of his followers to surrender to the English, and trust to their mercy. He was possessed, however, by the dreadful idea, that the English would transport him beyond the sea, and this was more hideous to him than death. These followers, who all, one after another, came in and obtained pardon, related, that during their captain's short and miserable sleep at this period, he used continually to murmur: 'Kala Panee! Kala Panee!'—The black sea! oh, the black sea!

At this conjuncture it struck Cheetoo that possibly the Nabob of Bhopal might make terms for him and the remnant of his durra with the English; and rapidly acting on the idea, he suddenly entered the camp of that prince. But when he learned that the Nabob could offer or promise nothing beyond a slender personal maintenance in some remote corner of India, he decamped as suddenly as he had come. While he stayed, his horses were constantly saddled, and his men slept with the bridles in their hands, ready to fly instantly. Preparations were making for the purpose of seizing him the very night he went off from the Bhopal camp. Though he got safely off, he was presently pursued by the Nabob's people, and by parties sent out by Sir John Malcolm. This distressed him so much that Rajun, one of his most faithful and valuable adherents, left him, and made his submission. Yet, after all this, Cheetoo found his way into the Deccan, and made common cause with the Arabs and chiefs of the Peishwa's routed army, receiving occasional protection from the killadar of the fortress of Asseerghur, a place of great strength, the ancient capital of Khandeish, and at this time included among the possessions of Scindia. His durra was completely destroyed, and nearly all his followers deserted him, but nothing could subdue Cheetoo's spirit, or induce him to surrender. His end, however, approached, and it was tragical and singular. Having joined Apa Sahib, he passed the rainy season of 1818 among the Mahadeo mountains; and upon that rajah's expulsion by the English, in February 1819, he accom-

panied him to the fort of Asseerghur. Being refused admittance, he sought shelter in a neighbouring jungle, and, on horseback and alone, attempted to penetrate a cover known to be infested by tigers. He was missed for some days, and no one knew what had become of him. His well-known horse was at last discovered grazing near the margin of the forest, saddled and bridled, and exactly in the state in which it was when Cheeto had last been seen upon it. A bag of two hundred and fifty rupees was found in the saddle, together with several seal-rings and some letters of Apa Sahib, promising future reward to the great robber. A search was made in the cover for the body; and at no great distance were found clothes clotted with blood, fragments of bones, and, lastly, the Pindarree's head entire, with the features in a state to be recognised. 'The chief's mangled remains,' says the best historian of his adventures, 'were given over to his son for interment; and the miserable fate of one who so shortly before had ridden at the head of 20,000 horse gave an awful lesson of the uncertainty of fortune, and drew pity even from those who had been the victims of his barbarity when living.'

With Cheeto ended the last of the Pindarrees, and the spirit which had animated their vast lawless associations. Their name is all that now remains of them, for the sad traces of their devastation have entirely disappeared under re-established order, industry, prosperity, police, and good government. It is now nearly a quarter of a century since that gallant officer, accomplished diplomatist, and able writer, the late Sir John Malcolm, said of them: 'There now remains not a spot in India that a Pindarree can call his home. They have been hunted like wild beasts; numbers have been killed; all ruined. Those who espoused their cause have fallen. They were early in the contest shunned like a contagion, and even the timid villagers, whom they so recently oppressed, were among the foremost to attack them. Their principal leaders had either died, submitted, or been made captives; while their followers, with the exception of a few whom the liberality and consideration of the British government have aided to become industrious, are lost in that popula-

tion from whose dross they originally issued. A minute investigation only can discover these once formidable disturbers, concealed as they now are among the lowest classes, where they are making some amends for past atrocities, by the benefit which is derived from their labour in restoring trade and cultivation. These freebooters had none of the prejudices of caste, for they belonged to all tribes. They never had either the pride of soldiers, of family, or of country; so that they were bound by none of those ties which among many of the communities in India assume an almost indestructible character. Other plunderers may arise from distempered times; but as a body, the Pindarrees are so effectually destroyed that their name is already almost forgotten, though not five years are passed since it spread terror and dismay over all India.'

The Mahratta wars, which were waged by the Marquis of Hastings, are chiefly interesting from their having led to these desirable results. In these wars there was very little manœuvring, either on our side or on that of the enemy. The great business of our commanders was to bring the army rapidly up with the foe, and to correctly calculate and provide for the means of so doing. The valour of our troops, native as well as European, their steadiness, rapidity in formation, and their bayonet-points, did the rest. But great was the foresight required and numerous the difficulties to be overcome, ere an Anglo-Indian army, with its amazing train of camp-followers, could be brought up with alert enemies who were for the most part mounted. After leaving their own frontiers, they had often to march hundreds of miles before they could come within reach of a tangible enemy. On these marches the followers could never be left far behind. A very large number of attendants was considered indispensable: one man was required for every three bullocks, and many were required for the elephants and camels of the army; every horse in the army had, besides the rider, two attendants, one to clean and take care of him, the other to cut the grass and provide his forage; the palanquin and litter-bearers for the sick formed another numerous and useful class; field-officers, including the people who carried

or had charge of their tents, baggage, &c., had each about forty attendants; captains had twenty, and subalterns ten servants each; the bazaar people, the merchants, their families, servants, &c., formed another numerous body. Generally, while marching, there were no towns to be depended on for supplies, and the army not only carried with it most of the means of subsistence for several months, but many articles of merchandise. The scene altogether resembled the migration of a nation guarded by troops, rather than the advance of an army to subdue an enemy.

On the first year of this war against the Pindarries and Mahrattas, the army of the Marquis of Hastings was assailed by a new and terrible enemy; this was the Indian cholera morbus, the virulence of which appears to have been increased by the crowded state of our camps. The disease first broke out at Jessore, the capital of a district in the southern quarter of Bengal, a populous and unhealthy city in the centre of the delta of the Ganges, and near the pestiferous Sunderbunds. It began its ravages as the rainy season of 1817 set in, and cut off the majority of those whom it attacked. From Jessore it spread in all directions, shewing, as it was thought, a preference for the valleys of rivers. Ascending the valley of the Ganges, it reached the camp of Brigadier-general Hardyman about the beginning of October; but the troops, being then encamped in a dry healthy country, and being but few in number, suffered comparatively little. Continuing its course westward, it fell with extraordinary violence upon the army commanded by Lord Hastings in person, just after his lordship had concluded the treaty with Scindia. This army, when first seized, was encamped in a low and unhealthy part of Bundelcund, on the banks of the river Sinde, a confluent of the Jumna, which has its source in the mountains of Malwah. The year was one of scarcity, and grain had been collected for the troops, through the camp-followers, with extreme difficulty, and of course of inferior quality. The water of the country, except where it could be obtained from running streams, was indifferent. The time of the year, too, was that at which the heat of the day is most strongly contrasted with the cold of the night. To all these extraordinary circumstances was

superadded the very crowded state of the camp of so large an army. For about ten days that the disease raged with its greatest fury, the whole camp was a hospital. The mortality amounted to about a tenth of the whole number collected there. Europeans and natives, soldiers and camp-followers, were alike affected; but the latter, being generally worse clothed and fed than the fighting-men, suffered in a greater proportion. Of the Europeans, fewer were seized; but those who took the disease more frequently died, and usually within a few hours. The camp was abandoned, and the army continued for some days to move to the eastward, in the hope of finding relief in a better climate: but each day's march many dead and dying were abandoned, and many more fell down on the road—so many that it was not possible to furnish the means for carrying them on, although the utmost possible provision had been made by the previous distribution of bullock-carts and elephants for the accommodation of the sick. Nothing was heard along the line of march but groans, and shrieks, and lamentations: even the healthy were broken in spirit and incapable of exertion; and, for the time, the efficiency of this fine army seemed to be entirely destroyed. Towards the end of November, when the army reached a healthy station at Erech, on the right bank of the Botwah River, the epidemic had visibly expended its violence. The camp was, however, still crowded with convalescents, when it marched with its noble commander to take an active part in the war.

During the rage of the epidemic, one or two of his servants in attendance sunk suddenly from behind his lordship's chair; and the noble marquis himself, seeing the probability of being attacked by the dreadful disease, gave secret instructions, in case of his dying, to be buried in his tent, lest the enemy should hear of his death, and be thereby encouraged to attack his disheartened and crippled troops. The return of health came very opportunely, for the army had been but a very short time at Erech when the marquis received intelligence that Scindia had sent an invitation to the Pindarrees. The Mahratta prince was reported to have promised the robbers that if they would come so near to Gwalior as to make his getting

to them easy, he would break his recent treaty with the English, and join them with the force which he had at his capital. The Pindarrees, in fact, were in full march for Gwalior, without meeting even a show of resistance from troops of Scindia stationed on their route, though the co-operation of his army for the extinction of the Pindarrees was an article of the treaty. The movements of these Pindarrees, and the suspicious conduct of Scindia's troops, imposed on the marquis the necessity of making a retrograde movement. 'We hurried back to the Sinde,' says his lordship; 'but this time we chose a position nearer to Gwalior, than that which we had before occupied. We were within thirty miles of the city, and our advanced-guard was sent to occupy the passes through the hills, which run at some distance south of Gwalior from the Sinde to the Chumbul. These passes were the only routes by which communication could take place between the Pindarrees and Scindia; and I was nearer to support my advanced-guard than the Maharajah (Scindia) was to attack it, could he bring his men to so desperate a stake. The Pindarrees, finding their hopes baffled, and the pass, &c., stopped, attempted to retire; but they had been followed close by our divisions, were surprised, dispersed, and slaughtered in a number of small actions. In short, they disappeared; and thus our objects were completed.'

While the forces under the Marquis of Hastings, and the divisions under Hislop, Malcolm, Marshall, Keir, Adams, and other officers, were chasing the Pindarrees from moor and mountain, valley and jungle, or reducing the forts in Malwah, Brigadier-general Smith, who had been reinforced at Poonah, prepared for an active pursuit of Bajee Rao, the fugitive Peishwa, who had flitted hither and thither like an *ignis-fatuus*. Mr. Mountstuart Elphinstone, having organised a police and a provisional administration for the city of Poonah, accompanied General Smith's division, which began its march at the end of November. Gokla, one of the Peishwa's evil advisers, but bravest officers, attempted to defend a ghaut leading to the high land where the Kistnah has its source, and where the Peishwa had found a refuge and a rallying-point; but the Mahratta was beaten, and the pass was cleared by the British with

more charge, the last of the many that they made during the day, recaptured the lost gun, and slaughtered the Arabs in a heap. The charge was utterly desperate, for every man felt that there was nothing between him and victory except torture and death. On this occasion Lieutenant Pattinson, who had been wounded and carried into a house, appeared again at the head of his men, and continued to exert the little strength he had left until he received another wound, which proved mortal. Captain Swanston and Lieutenant Connellon were rescued; and every man of the Arabs who had penetrated to the pagoda was bayoneted without mercy. By a little after nine, the enemy were completely driven from the village and all the ground near it, and our fainting sepoys were then enabled to obtain a supply of water, the only refreshment they got during the whole day and following night. Where the desperate Arabs had failed, there was slight chance that the cowardly Mahrattas would renew the attempt. Captain Staunton and his people passed the night without any molestation. At daybreak on the following morning the Mahratta army was seen hovering about the village, but none of them would venture near; and this day also passed without any molestation. Captain Staunton had consumed so much powder during the nine hours' fighting of the preceding day, that he had only a few rounds of ammunition left; and provisions in the camp there were none, and none were to be procured in the village. Despairing, therefore, of being able to reach Poonah, he determined to move back to Seroor. He began his retreat in the dark on the night of the 2nd of January; he sacrificed much of his baggage in order to provide the means of conveying his numerous wounded, but he brought off not only his guns, but likewise all his wounded, and with them reached Seroor by nine o'clock the next morning, the 3rd of January. The men had had no refreshment but water from the 31st of December. Three officers were killed and two wounded; 62 men were killed and 113 wounded, exclusive of the auxiliary horse. The loss of men was most severe in the artillery, 12 being killed and 8 wounded out of a detail for two six-pounders only.

In the course of the 3rd of January, the day on which

Captain Staunton got back to Seroor, Brigadier-general Smith reached the village of Corregaum with his strong division. The Peishwa and his Mahrattas fled back to the table-land near the sources of the Kistnah, from which they had descended. General Smith followed them closely, and Brigadier-general Pritzler, with another division, was moving from another point to intercept them. The Mahrattas continued to turn and twist like eels; and though Pritzler trod upon their tail more than once, and cut off part of it, they could not be so overtaken as to be brought to a general action, or even to a stand. They were very nearly caught in the neighbourhood of Satara, on the 28th of January; but they escaped by a ghaut, with the loss of part of their rear-guard. A small detachment under Colonel Boles cannonaded them out of another ghaut, which they were attempting to thread; but they only changed their line of march. The troops were exhausted by this harassing pursuit, which seemed to produce no visible advantage. Mountstuart Elphinstone had the merit of recommending a better plan of operations. This was to storm the many strong places in the country, to deprive the Peishwa of the means of subsistence, to reduce Satara, which was still the nominal capital of the Mahratta empire, and to reinstate the Satara family in an independent sovereignty. The fortress of Satara surrendered to Brigadier-general Smith on the 10th of February, the day on which he first appeared before it. Some other places were in process of reduction, when the Peishwa made certain rash movements, which enabled General Smith to fall upon him at Ashtah, on the 20th of February, with the 2nd and 7th regiments of Madras light cavalry, and two squadrons of His Majesty's 22nd dragoons. Bajee Rao, the dastardly Peishwa, deserted his palanquin and his army, mounting a horse, and galloping away as soon as the battle began; but Gokla, his general, seeing that he must either fight or lose the baggage, and nearly everything else, made a bold stand, outflanking Smith's small force, and at one moment threatening it in the rear. But the British dragoons charged his *gole*,* and killed him in the charge. The

* A mass of Mahratta cavalry.

death of Gokla left the Mahrattas without a head. From this moment, all was confusion and panic; each mass of cavalry breaking as our dragoons approached it. Some faint resistance was attempted in the camp; but our dragoons dashed in, and made good booty. Twelve elephants and fifty-seven camels formed part of this prize. General Smith was slightly wounded on the head, and Lieutenant Warrant, of the 22nd dragoons, was wounded by Gokla, who fought fiercely in the *melée*, and wounded several of our men before he fell; but no one was killed on our side, and only seventeen or eighteen of the soldiers were wounded.

The remnant of the Peishwa's army fled towards the north, being daily thinned by desertion. Brigadier-general Pritzler, General Monro, Colonels Prother and Deacon, reduced all the forts that remained; the Mahratta flag was fast disappearing, and so were the hopes of the Mahratta chiefs. Our divisions and detachments in the field, in almost all parts of India, were too numerous and too well posted to allow of any junction being effected between the Peishwa and the forces of any of our other enemies.

After the battle of Ashtah, Brigadier-general Smith repaired to Satara, in order to assist Mr. Elphinstone in setting up the rajah. In this way the Peishwa gained a few days' respite during which he continued to press to the north-west with the design of throwing himself into the territories of the Nizam of the Deccan, which he hoped to find ill furnished with troops. But turning back from Satara and making a short halt at Seroor, Smith renewed his pursuit of the Peishwa on the 10th of March. Brigadier-general Doveton, with his division, moved in another direction, in the expectation of intercepting the Peishwa. Nevertheless, the Mahratta traversed the Nizam's dominions from west to east, and appeared on the banks of the Whurdah on the 1st of April. But as his van was crossing that river, with the intention of marching upon Nagpoor, it was met and driven back by a small detachment under Colonel Scott. The Peishwa then tried to cross the river at another point, but here he was met by Colonel Adams, and was informed by his scouts that General Doveton was

getting close upon him. Without waiting the arrival of Doveton, Adams followed the Mahrattas, came up with them near Seuni, and with only one regiment of native cavalry and some horse-artillery, gave them a signal overthrow. The enemy fled through the jungles, leaving behind them five guns, the Peishwa's much-sunken treasure, three elephants, and 200 camels. This time Bajee Rao had a very narrow escape; for, though he began to run as soon as his people began to fight, a palanquin in which he had just been riding was taken, and was found to be perforated by a shot. More than 1,000 of his Mahrattas remained dead on the field. They were knocked down by our horse-artillery, or by our cavalry, in their flight. They can scarcely have stood anywhere, for Colonel Adams's total loss was only two wounded. General Doveton was near enough to hear the firing of Adams's guns; but it was found necessary to halt our troops, in order to wait for supplies; and then mistakes were committed as to the direction in which the pursuit ought to be continued. Nor was it easy to avoid these errors, for the Peishwa's army split up into various detachments, and each took a route of its own. Two-thirds of his people quitted his standard altogether, and were only anxious to reach their homes as speedily as might be. Bajee Rao's whole object now was to get back to the north-east; but here he found his progress stopped by General Sir Thomas Hislop, who was returning from Malwah to the Deccan. On his way, Sir Thomas had resorted to a measure of unusual severity. The fort of Talnair or Talneir, situated on the north bank, and commanding a ford over the river Tapti, was one of the places ceded to the English by Holkar under the late treaty. Sir Thomas had in his possession Holkar's own orders for the quiet surrender of the place; yet a fire was opened upon his troops from the fort. The Mahratta killadar, or commandant, was warned that if he continued to resist the order of his master, he would be dealt with as a rebel: without heeding the message, the killadar continued to fire. Upon this Sir Thomas Hislop occupied the pettah, or open town, and turned his artillery upon the fort. The gate of the fort was blown open by two six-pounders. The flank com-

by the Marquis of Hastings to the military and political command of Malwah, which had perhaps suffered more than any other part of India. Hundreds upon hundreds of its villages were deserted and roofless; the ferocious tigers of the jungles literally usurped the country, and fought with the returning inhabitants for their fields. In the state of Holkar alone, of 3,701 villages only 2,038 were inhabited; 1,663 were 'without lamp'—were wholly deserted. Under the wise rule established by Malcolm, more than two-thirds of these deserted villages were restored and repeopled before the end of 1820; and in less than five years from the time our army first occupied the country, Sir John could boast with an honourable pride, and with perfect correctness, that Malwah and the rest of Central India were tranquil and contented, and rapidly advancing in population and prosperity. 'It may be asserted that history affords few examples where a change in the political condition of a country has been attended with such an aggregate of increased happiness to its inhabitants, as that which was effected within four years in Central India; and it is pleasing to think that, with the exception of suppressing a few Bheel robbers, peace was restored, and has hitherto been maintained, without one musket being fired.' Accustomed to the extremities of military violence, the inhabitants of the country, on the English first entering, betrayed feelings of doubt and alarm. These were, by some, mistaken for dislike to our supremacy; but they arose only out of fear of insult or outrage, and they were speedily removed by the strict discipline preserved by our troops, whether stationary or marching. In a very short time, wherever troops or individuals moved, they were received with cordiality, as the friends and protectors of the people. To organise the country, honourable and intelligent British officers were sent into every part of it. 'The result has been fortunate beyond anticipation. These agents, within their respective circles, have not only, by their direct intercourse with all classes, established great influence, but spread a knowledge of our character and intentions, which has increased respect and confidence; and they have in almost all cases succeeded, by the arbitration of

differences, and the settlement of local disputes, *in preserving the peace of the country without troops*. The most exact observance of certain principles is required from these officers, and their line is very carefully and distinctly prescribed. The object has been to escape every interference with the internal administration of the country, beyond what the preservation of the public peace demanded.' In other parts of India the change was equally beneficial—the blessings derived from the conquest of the Mahrattas and the extirpation of the Pindarrees were equally apparent. As Bishop Heber was travelling through the country in 1824, he overheard a conversation among some villagers, who were comparing the present peaceable times with those in which 'Amcer Khan and Bappoo Scindia came up with their horsemen, and spoiled all the land, and smote all the people, and burned the cities through Mewar and Marwar, till thou comest unto the salt wilderness.' He also heard them say that corn had been gradually getting cheaper, and notwithstanding a late unfavourable season, was still not so dear as it used to be in the years of trouble. The kind and warm-hearted prelate adds: 'When such have been the effects of British supremacy, who will refuse to pray for the continuance of our empire?'

The reputation of the British in India has never stood higher than at the conclusion of the Pindarree and Mahratta war; and during the four remaining years of Lord Hastings's government, the face of Central India was changed to an extent which would have appeared almost incredible to any one who had not contemplated upon the spot the rapid progress of the change, and studied the causes by which it was produced. No war had begun in a higher motive, or had ended in a more positive good to mankind. 'The campaign which had just terminated,' says Malcolm, 'was not an attack upon a state, or upon a body of men, but upon a system. It was order contending against anarchy; and the first triumph was so complete, that there ceased, almost from the moment, to be any who cherished hopes of the contest being either prolonged or revived: the victory gained was slight, comparatively speaking, over armies, to what it was over mind. The universal distress, which a series

of being the father of a line of kings was gone; he was become the last of his race; his blood would flow in the veins of no future occupant of his throne; no successor in a distant age would look back upon him as a progenitor; his history would end with his own life. All this, however, more calmly viewed, would be found to resolve itself into his merely finding himself in a new position, different from, but not in reality perhaps worse than, the one he had lost. Accordingly, it does not appear that his grief long retained the bitterness and prostration with which it was at first accompanied. He was so ill for a short time that his life was considered to be in danger, and was only saved by copious bleeding; but in little more than three months he had so far recovered both his health and spirits, as to be able, at a dinner given by the Prussian ambassador, to entertain the company with a song.

The sequel of the speech was all congratulatory. It referred to the improvement which had taken place, in the course of the preceding year, in almost every branch of domestic history—to the improved state of public credit—to the progressive improvement of the revenue in its most important branches; mentioned the treaties that had been concluded with Spain and Portugal, with a view to the abolition of the slave-trade; and concluded by recommending to the attention of parliament the deficiency which had so long existed in the number of places of public worship belonging to the Established Church, when compared with the increased and increasing population of the country. The important change which had taken place in the economical condition of the country, it was observed, 'could not fail to withdraw from the disaffected the principal means of which they had availed themselves for the purpose of fomenting a spirit of discontent, which unhappily led to acts of insurrection and treason;' 'and his royal highness,' it was added, 'entertains the most confident expectation, that the state of peace and tranquillity, to which the country is now restored, will be maintained, against all attempts to disturb it, by the persevering vigilance of the magistracy, and by the loyalty and good sense of the people.' Thus did the government flatter itself that its troubles were over, and

that the year 1817, in taking its departure, had carried its evil spirit along with it.

Perhaps, however, this apparent confidence may have been partly assumed by ministers, with a view to the defence of their own proceedings in coping with the late attempts of the disaffected. The best case they could make out for themselves would be to show that the measures they had adopted had been successful in putting down or keeping down disturbance, and that all the dangers against which the extraordinary powers intrusted to them had been intended to provide were now at an end. On the subject of these extraordinary powers, their cessation or their continuance, the speech said not a word. But as soon as it was read, and before the address in answer had been moved, the opposition in both Houses demanded the instant repeal of the act of last session suspending the Habeas Corpus Act. On this, ministers announced that it was their intention to present a bill for that purpose on the following day, and to propose the suspension of the standing orders, as had been done in the case of the act to be repealed, that it might pass without delay. The bill was accordingly passed through the Lords on the 28th, and through the Commons on the 29th.

No amendment was moved to the address; but it gave rise to some debate in both Houses. Lord Lansdowne denied that the recent trials had furnished evidence of the existence of any such conspiracy, or general disposition to insurrection throughout the kingdom, as had been assumed by ministers. 'In the trials at Derby, where it was the business and the particular object of the attorney-general to prove that the discontented there had a correspondence with others in different quarters, he had completely failed. He could not prove that in any part of the country there had been the slightest connection with these conspirators. This terrible conspiracy, too, was suppressed without the slightest difficulty by eighteen dragoons.' His lordship admitted that the Derby conspirators had been very properly brought to trial, and justly convicted; but this, he said, was the only thing ministers had to bring forward as an apology for their measures. Still, he contended, 'it was not the suspension

itself,' and only a subject of material consideration as confirming the statements in the reports of the secret committees of the preceding session. The fact of this actual insurrection, so clearly proved, and about which there could be no dispute, appeared, it was declared, 'to the committee to have established, beyond the possibility of a doubt, the credit due to the information mentioned in the last report, respecting the plans of more extended insurrection which had previously been concerted, and respecting the postponement of those plans to the 9th or 10th of June.' Reference was also made to the movements in and near Nottingham on the night of the 9th of June; to a meeting of delegates held at Huddersfield on the 6th, and a tumultuous assemblage which took place in that neighbourhood on the night of the 8th; and to the expectations proved to have been entertained in Yorkshire and the other disturbed districts, of powerful support and co-operation from London—'however erroneous such an expectation may have been, with respect to the extent to which it was supposed to have existed'—as further confirmatory of the statements in the same report. But a decided opinion was expressed that, not only in the country in general, but in those districts where the designs of the disaffected were most actively and unremittingly pursued, the great body of the people had remained untainted, even during the periods of the greatest internal difficulty and distress. It was intimated, however, that some of the persons who had been engaged in the late desperate projects, particularly in London, were still active, and appeared determined to persevere, though with decreasing numbers and resources. The report then proceeded to take up the subject of the arrests that had taken place during the suspension of the Habeas Corpus Act. In addition to the cases of persons against whom bills of indictment had been found by grand juries, and of those who had either been tried or had fled from justice, warrants, it was stated, had been issued by the secretary of state against ten persons who had not been taken, and against forty-four others who had not been brought to trial. Of these, seven had been discharged on examination; one had been released after being finally committed; another had been

discharged on account of illness; another had died in prison. All these arrests and detentions the committee considered to have been fully justified by the circumstances under which they had taken place. 'The committee,' it was added, 'understand that up to a certain period expectations were entertained of being able to bring to trial a large proportion of the persons so arrested and detained; but that these expectations have, from time to time, been unavoidably relinquished.' On the whole, it had appeared to the committee, the report declared in conclusion, that the government, in the execution of the powers vested in it by the two acts of the last session, had acted with due discretion and moderation. The report of the committee of the Commons travelled over the subject by nearly the same road; its expressions, however, upon the different points of the case, were generally stronger, and it adverted to a few additional facts or circumstances. The outbreak at Derby on the night of the 9th of June was designated an insurrection, and described as 'the last open attempt to carry into effect the revolution which had so long been the object of an extended conspiracy.' The trials at Derby, however, were referred to as proving the exemplary conduct of the mass of the population in the country through which the insurrection passed; and the committee had no doubt that the numbers of those who were either pledged or prepared to engage in actual insurrection had generally been much exaggerated by the leaders of the disaffected, from the obvious policy both of giving importance to themselves, and of encouraging their followers. They hoped that the time of delusion might be passing away; but it was nevertheless their opinion that it would still require all the vigilance of government and of the magistracy to maintain the tranquillity which had been restored. 'Your committee,' the report then proceeded, 'have hitherto applied their observations to the lately disturbed districts in the country. In adverting to the state of the metropolis during the same period they have observed with concern that a small number of active and infatuated individuals have been unremittingly engaged in arranging plans of insurrection, in endeavouring to foment disturbances that might lead to it, and in procur-

Besides two reports, which were presented and ordered to be printed towards the end of the session, it originated a bill 'for appointing commissioners to inquire concerning charities in England for the education of the poor,' which passed into a law, though not without suffering some curtailment and mutilation in the Lords, where, indeed, the motion for going into committee upon it was opposed both by the chancellor and Lord Redesdale, but was carried nevertheless by a majority of 10 to 8. In conformity with the recommendation contained in the speech of the prince-regent at the opening of the session, an act was passed 'for building and promoting the building of additional churches in populous parishes,' by means of a grant of one million sterling, to be applied under the direction of commissioners appointed by the crown. Of various attempts made to reform the criminal law, none of any importance were successful, with the exception of a bill brought in by Mr. Bennet for establishing a better system of rewarding persons who had been instrumental in apprehending highway-robbers and other offenders; and another brought in by Mr. G. Bankes for making it illegal to buy game, as it already was to sell it. Sir S. Romilly carried a bill through the Commons for taking away the penalty of death from the offence of stealing from a shop to the value of five shilling; but it was thrown out on the second reading in the Lords, on the motion of the chancellor. The same potent voice prevailed upon their lordships to reject at the same stage, by a majority of 31 to 13, a bill introduced by Lord Erskine, 'to prevent arrests on the charge of libel before indictment found.' In the Commons, however, the government only succeeded in defeating a motion of Sir James Mackintosh, for the appointment of a select committee to inquire into the forgery of the Bank of England notes, by proposing an address to the regent, requesting his royal highness to issue a commission under the great seal for the same purpose. A select committee was appointed, on the motion of Mr. Sergeant Onslow, to inquire into the effect of the usury laws, which reported in favour of their appeal; and the honourable member gave notice that he would early in the next session bring in a bill to carry that recommendation into effect. A bill

for the amendment of the election laws brought in by Mr. Wynn was negatived on the third reading in the Commons by a majority of 51 to 44; as was another for the alteration of the law relating to tithes brought in by Mr. Curwen by a majority of 44 to 15 on the second reading. Repeated discussions took place on a bill introduced by Sir Robert Peel (father of the present baronet) for limiting the number of hours during which apprentices and others employed in cotton and other mills and factories should be permitted to work; it passed the Commons, but it was at last dropped for the present session, after being committed in the Lords, where it had encountered a strong opposition, counsel having been allowed by their lordships to be heard, and evidence to be brought forward against it. Mr. J. Smith obtained leave to bring in a bill for the amendment of the bankruptcy-laws; but it appears not to have been persevered with. Nor did anything come of a bill to amend the Copyright Act of 1814, which was brought in by Sir Egerton Brydges, and carried over some stages in the Commons. But a select committee was afterwards appointed to consider the subject, on the motion of Mr. Wynn, which recommended that the Copyright Act should be repealed, except in regard to the delivery of one copy of every new work to the British Museum, the other public libraries being compensated by a fixed pecuniary allowance. On the 2nd of June, Sir Francis Burdett brought forward a scheme of parliamentary reform in a series of twenty-six resolutions—the last divided into six heads—comprising the principles of universal male suffrage, equal electoral districts, elections all on the same day, vote by ballot, and a fresh parliament once in every year at the least; the motion was seconded by Lord Cochrane (the present Earl of Dundonald), who observed that it might probably be the last time he should ever have the honour of addressing the house on any subject, and alluded with great feeling, and apparently amidst the general sympathy of the House, to his own cruel case; afterwards Mr. Brougham, Mr. Canning, and Mr. Lamb, all spoke at considerable length; and then, the vote being taken on the previous question, which had . . . Canning, the numbers were found to be 10

The budget was brought forward by the chancellor of the exchequer on the 20th of April. The greater part of the navy, army, ordnance, and miscellaneous estimates had been already voted; and Mr. Vansittart now stated that the vote for the army, which had last year been £9,412,373, would this year be £8,970,000; that the vote for the navy, which had last year been £7,596,022, would this year be £6,456,800; that the vote for the ordnance, which had last year been £1,270,690, would this year be £1,245,600; that the miscellaneous estimates, which last year amounted to £1,795,000, would this year amount to £1,720,000—without including, however, the million granted for the building of churches, which was to be provided for by an issue of exchequer bills. Altogether, with the addition of £2,500,000 for the interest on exchequer bills and a sinking fund attached to them, and one or two extraordinary items, the total amount of the regular supplies for the service of the year would be £21,011,000, the amount for the last year having been £22,304,091. This was, of course, exclusive of the interest of the debt, which at this time was not quite £30,000,000. No new taxes were proposed, nor the repeal or reduction of any old ones. The principal feature of the finance minister's announcement was a scheme for forming, out of the 3 per cent. stock, a new stock bearing interest at $3\frac{1}{2}$ per cent.; by which a sum of £3,000,000 would be raised for the public service of the year. It was proposed also to fund £27,000,000 of the floating debt, which had accumulated to the inconvenient amount of about £63,000,000.

The session had scarcely commenced when ministers were asked in both Houses whether it was intended that the resumption of cash-payments by the bank should really take place on the 5th of July, as then fixed by law. In reply it was stated that the bank had made ample preparation for resuming its payments in cash at the time fixed by parliament, and that the government knew of nothing in the internal state of the country, or in its political relations with foreign powers, which would render it expedient to continue the restriction; 'but that there was reason to believe that pecuniary arrangements of

foreign powers were going on, of such a nature and extent as might probably make it necessary for parliament to continue the restriction so long as the immediate effects of those arrangements were in operation.' This explanation was treated by the opposition with great contempt. 'The truth was, as it appeared to him,' Mr. Tierney observed, 'that there were some persons in this country very much disposed to continue the restriction if they could find any excuse for it; and as such excuse did not offer itself at home, they looked abroad for it.' In the other House, Lord King declared that the reason assigned by ministers 'was so extraordinary in itself, and so unintelligible to the country, it being impossible to conceive how in reality the negotiation of foreign loans could tend to prevent the resumption of cash-payments by the Bank of England, that it could only be considered as the ostensible reason, and not the real one.' Nevertheless there can be no doubt that the explanation thus denounced was perfectly correct. Mr. Tooke shows that by the latter part of 1817 the value of bank-paper had been virtually restored, and that the bank was then in a position to resume cash-payments. 'And the directors,' he adds, 'so far from taking advantage of the prolonged term of the restriction, were adopting measures for anticipating it; for in the months of April and September, 1817, they actually undertook by public notice to pay, and did pay, a large proportion of their notes in coin.' It is understood that the payments in gold in pursuance of these notices exceeded five millions sterling. Mr. Tooke blames the bank and the government for co-operating to reduce the rate of interest on exchequer bills in the summer of 1817, while it was notorious that negotiations were going forward for the raising of loans to a very large amount by France and others of the continental states. 'The government,' he argues, 'ought to have taken the opportunity of the comparatively high price of stocks in the summer of 1817, to have diminished instead of increasing the unfunded debt; and the bank, instead of extending its advances upon exchequer bills, at a reduced interest, ought, with a view to counteract the effect, which would otherwise be inevitable, of the tendency of British capital

not to have to investment in foreign loans, not only its existing extended its advances, but to have diminished the securities.' But now commenced both a depression from the exchanges and a diminution of the circulation. 'Foremost operation of a fresh set of disturbing causes, subtler were among these causes,' Mr. Tooke continues, 'and Russian the large loans negotiated for the French led by them, governments, the high rate of interest granted by them, and the comparatively low rate in this country of British out a great inducement for the transmission of corn in the capital to the continent. The importations of 1818, were latter part of 1817, and through the whole of the year being then on a large scale and at high prices, our ports were at the same time, as open without duty. And there was at the same time, as has before been noticed, a very great increase in the exports of general imports; while a great part of the foreign credits, the 1817 and 1818 were speculative and on long forthcoming returns for which, therefore, would not be repaid till 1819 and 1820. Under these circumstances were not rather matter of surprise that the exchange was depressed in more depressed, than that they were so much the government of 1818.' For this state of things the bank authorities; they ought to have made preparation for a course which at least to have abstained from pursuing and the foreign gave additional facilities to the negotiation of the depression loans; but, that mischief having been done, they furnished a of the exchanges thereby produced certain depreciation. A good reason for the postponement of the Bank of Commons bill was eventually brought into the House of July, 1819; for continuing the restriction till the 5th of the Houses, but various amendments were moved in both Houses, and the were only supported by insignificant minor measures, how- bill was passed in the end of May. The Lauderdale, in ever, drew two long protests from Lord Lauderdale on which it one of which his lordship declared the ground for the raising of had been introduced and supported—that its coin—to be foreign loans would drain this country of, and ignorance 'an opinion founded on gross misconception of the subject.'

Some rather remarkable proceedings took place in the royal family, no course of the session in relation to the royal

fewer than four members of which were married in the earlier part of this year. The first of the four marriages was that of the Princess Elizabeth, his majesty's third daughter, to His Serene Highness Frederic Joseph Louis Charles Augustus, Landgrave and Hereditary Prince of Hesse-Homburg, on the 7th of April. In this case the two Houses of parliament were asked only to offer their congratulations to the regent, the queen, and the new-married couple. As the bride had nearly completed her forty-eighth year, her marriage could not be expected to contribute anything towards continuing the line of the old king, who now, notwithstanding his fifteen sons and daughters, twelve of whom were still alive, was left without any descendant beyond the first generation. A few days afterwards, however—on the 13th of April—Lord Liverpool brought down a message from the regent to the Lords, and Lord Castlereagh to the Commons, in which his royal highness informed the House that treaties of marriage were in negotiation between the Duke of Clarence and the Princess (Adelaide Louisa Theresa Caroline Amelia) of Saxe-Meiningen, eldest daughter of the late reigning Duke of Saxe-Meiningen; and also between the Duke of Cambridge and the Princess (Augusta Wilhelmina Louisa) of Hesse, youngest daughter of the Landgrave Frederic, and niece of the Elector of Hesse; and which went on to say, that after the afflicting calamity which the prince and the nation had sustained in the loss of the Princess Charlotte, his royal highness was fully persuaded that the House of Commons would feel how essential it was to the best interests of the country that he should be enabled to make a suitable provision for such of his royal brothers as should have contracted marriages with the consent of the crown. This last expression was designed to intimate both that the proposed provision was not to be extended to the Duke of Sussex, and that it was to comprehend the Duke of Cumberland, who had been married three years ago, to the Princess Frederica Sophia Charlotta, daughter of Frederic V., Duke of Mecklenburg-Strelitz, and previously the wife, first of Frederic Louis Charles, Prince of Prussia, from whom she had been divorced, and, secondly, of Frederic William, Prince of

politics and temper, Lord Ellenborough. This remarkable man, whose talents, so long as he continued in his vigour, were of the most commanding character, seemed never to have recovered from his discomfiture by Hone in the preceding year. We have already quoted the terms in which he wrote to Lord Sidmouth on the day after the last of the three trials and acquittals. The purpose of resignation which he announced in that letter he had carried into effect about three months before his death. He was, when he died, in his sixty-ninth year, and he had presided in the court of King's Bench since April 1802. In August this same year had died, at the age of eighty-five, Warren Hastings, whose leading counsel Lord Ellenborough (then Mr. Law) had been throughout the five years of his memorable trial before the House of Lords, since the termination of which a quarter of a century had now elapsed. And, remarkably enough, before the year was out, Hastings had been followed to the grave by the most pertinacious and vindictive of his accusers and enemies, Sir Philip Francis. He died at the age of seventy-eight, on one of the last days of December, when there wanted only about a month to make exactly half a century since the appearance of the first of the famous Letters of Junius, of which he has been supposed to be the author.

The most important event belonging to the general history of Europe which marks this year is the congress of the allied sovereigns held at Aix-la-Chapelle for the purpose of withdrawing the army of occupation from France. Of the 150,000 troops left in that country in 1815, 30,000, of which 6000 were English, had been withdrawn last year; and, although it had been originally stipulated that the occupation might extend to five years, it had been for some time universally expected and understood that it would be actually put an end to now at the end of three. So much was this the case, that the holding of the congress was looked upon as little more than going through a necessary form. And, in point of fact, little or nothing of deliberation or discussion appears to have taken place. The ministers of the several powers, including the Duke of Wellington and Lord Castlereagh, as representing

his Britannic majesty, had collected at Aix-la-Chapelle, by the 25th of September; the King of Prussia arrived the next day; the Emperors of Austria and Russia on the 28th. Two preliminary conferences were held on the 30th and 31st; and at a third, held on the 2nd of October, the evacuation was unanimously agreed upon. An envoy was immediately despatched to Paris, where the news was received on the 5th. A few more conferences were held, to settle the time and manner of the evacuation, and also to determine how much of the pecuniary indemnity of 700 millions of francs, imposed upon France, still remained due. But by the 9th, an agreement embracing all points was drawn up in the form of a treaty, and signed by the ministers of the several powers; and on the 17th the sovereigns affixed their own signatures. It was settled that the army of occupation should be entirely withdrawn by the 30th of November, or sooner if possible; and the sum remaining to be paid by France was definitively affixed at 265 millions of francs. Afterwards, on the representation of the Duke of Richelieu, a slight modification was made by another protocol in the arrangements respecting the dates at which the successive instalments of the indemnity should be discharged by France. The removal of whatever apprehensions and objections might have been entertained in any quarter to the decision thus come to by the allied sovereigns, is understood to have been chiefly due to the efforts of Louis XVIII. and the Duke of Wellington; and the smoothing away of any difficulties that arose after the congress met is attributed principally to his grace. 'Sufficient justice,' writes a recent French historian, 'has not generally been done to the Duke of Wellington for the liberal and faithful manner in which he protected the interests of France throughout all the negotiations with foreign powers. . . . The duke was highly favourable to France in everything that related to the evacuation of her territory. His position as generalissimo of the army of occupation gave a great weight to his advice on this question; he was consulted at every step, and his opinion was always given in terms expressive of an elevation of view and sentiment which did honour to his character. . . . With the cessa-

speeches at Sir Francis Burdett's election dinner: 'Another curious thing took place at this dinner—the toast of "Jeremy Bentham, Esq., the unanswerable advocate of the rights of the people." I wonder who the baronet and his Rump will find out next! what unknown creature they will bring forth! There is no danger, you see, from Mr. Bentham; no danger that he will become the rival, or foil, of the baronet. It is safe to toast and praise *him*. Little care is taken to preserve consistency; for Mr. Bentham, if he can, with his quaint and unintelligible language and mode of stating and of reasoning, be called the advocate of anything, is the advocate of universal suffrage,* which he would extend even to women, *and which, by such extension, he would, if he were attended to, render ridiculous.*' And then Bentham, his speculations, and his admirers, are kicked out of the way in the most summary and contemptuous style: 'There is one thing which makes Mr. Bentham a favourite with this little band of feeble and ambitious men; indeed there are two things: he cannot be a rival; and he would, if he could, hurt Mr. Hunt and me. He shows his teeth, but he has not dared to bite. He would have done it, if he had dared. But, indeed, he ran no risk: for very few, comparatively speaking, buy his book; and those who do, never read it half through. It is a *corvée* to read it. It is not only bombast, but quaint bombast, and puzzling and tedious beyond mortal endurance. . . . The book is wholly inefficient. . . . A very fit and proper person this to be toasted by the baronet and his Rump.'

* At this time Burdett had given up *universal suffrage* for what he called *general suffrage*.

CHAPTER XV.

State of the Country—Opening of Parliament—Care of the King's Person—Resumption of Cash-payments—Financial Measures—Prorogation.

THE series of bankruptcies which had commenced in the latter part of the year 1818, continued throughout the first months of 1819. 'The largest,' says the historian of prices, 'in point of amount of the articles of which there was so great an excess of the importation, was cotton; and it was in this article that the fall in price was the greatest, and the failures among those concerned in it, consequently the most extensive. The error usual on such occasions had been committed; the stocks on the spot had been, as we have seen, greatly reduced in 1816, and a rise of price of this reduced stock was perfectly justified; but then, as in more recent instances, the advanced price was not confined to the small stocks on the spot, but was paid for large quantities in the countries of growth, to be shipped hither.' The result, he goes on to state, was, that 'importers, speculators, and manufacturers were successively ruined by having embarked too largely upon the anticipation of the maintenance of the former range of high prices. There were also very extensive failures in New York, but more especially in Charleston, and other southern ports of the United States, at the close of 1818, and at the commencement of 1819.' This state of commercial pressure and distress could not but make itself be felt to some extent by the manufacturing population. It may not have gone the length of throwing any considerable number of them out of employment; but it could not fail to affect the labour-market, and to reduce still further the rate of wages, already inadequate to counterbalance the continued high price of provisions.

The large importations and eager speculation which had gone on for the greater part of the past year, however, had had the effect of swelling the revenue, and giving a

stood, had been derived from the gold coin of this realm. The opposition expressed some dissatisfaction; but the proposed bill was immediately brought in, and passed with all possible expedition through both Houses. It prohibited the continuance of the cash-payments under the notices till the end of the current session. Much more elaborate reports, embracing the whole extent of the subject, were presented by the two committees about a month later. These expositions represented the condition of the bank as eminently flourishing. Its liabilities, it was stated, amounted, on the 30th of January, 1819, to £33,894,580, and its assets in government securities and other credits to £39,096,900, exclusive of the permanent debt of £14,686,800 due from the government, and repayable on the expiration of the charter. The entire surplus in favour of the bank, therefore, was £19,899,120; and what might be called its immediate available surplus, £5,202,320. The bullion in its coffers also, which had been very much reduced at the close of the war, had gone on increasing from July 1815 to October 1817, at which date it was much greater than it had ever before been since the establishment of the bank, although it had again been brought down by the payments that had since taken place. The committees, under the direction of the government, which was so influentially represented in each, agreed in recommending a plan for the resumption of cash-payments, which was first embodied in a series of resolutions, and in that form submitted to the two Houses. It was founded upon the principle first announced by Mr. Ricardo in 1816, in his *Proposals for an Economical and Secure Currency*, that the bank should be bound to exchange its notes, not for coin, but for gold ingots, the fineness of which should be attested by a stamp, and only in quantities above a certain weight, at a rate to be diminished from time to time until it should have descended to the Mint price of £3 17s. 10½*d.* per ounce. But, although this principle was adopted as the basis of the plan, the complete exchangeability of bank-notes for cash was provided for as its ultimate result. The resolutions were first moved in the Lords on the 21st of May, by Lord Harrowby, the president of the council, who had officiated as chairman of

their lordship's committee. A series of counter-resolutions moved by Lord Lauderdale, although they met with no support, even from his own side of the House, gave occasion to a debate, which was principally sustained by his lordship, and Lords Liverpool and Grenville; the government plan received the approbation, not only of Grenville, but also of Lords King and Lansdowne; Lauderdale's resolutions were negatived without a division, and those moved by Lord Harrowby were agreed to. The subject was much more fully discussed in the Commons, where the ministerial resolutions were proposed on the 24th, by Mr. Peel, in an elaborate and remarkable speech. Mr. Peel had been the chairman of the secret committee; the report of the committee was probably of his drawing up, and the government plan was understood to have been arranged and put together by him; but not only was he not the originator of its leading principle; it would appear from his own statement that neither he himself nor the government had been prepared for the adoption of such a plan when the committee was appointed and the subject was first brought forward. He began his speech by frankly announcing that, in consequence of the evidence which had been received by the committee, and the divisions which had arisen upon it, his opinions had undergone a very material change. 'He was ready to avow, without shame or remorse, that he went into the committee with a very different opinion from that which he at present entertained; for his views of the subject were most materially different when he voted against the resolutions brought forward in 1811 by Mr. Horner, as the chairman of the bullion committee. Having gone into the inquiry, determined to dismiss all former impressions that he might have received, and to obliterate from his memory the vote which he had given some years since when the same question was discussed, he had resolved to apply to it his undivided and unprejudiced attention, and adopt every inference that authentic information or mature reflection should offer to his mind; and he had no hesitation in stating that, although he should probably even now vote, if it were again brought before the House, in opposition to the practical measure then recommended

took place. The second reading was only carried by the narrow majority of 155 votes against 142. Another debate arose on the motion for going into committee, which was made memorable by declamations of extraordinary eloquence from Mackintosh on the one side, and Canning on the other. The third reading gave rise to another animated discussion, followed by a division, in which the numbers were—ayes, 190; noes, 129. In the Lords, also, the bill encountered the keenest opposition; an amendment, moved on the question of its committal, was, after a debate of some length, supported by 47 votes against 100. The object of the act was sufficiently declared by its title, which was: ‘To prevent the enlisting or engagement of his majesty’s subjects to serve in foreign service, and the fitting-out or equipping in his majesty’s dominions vessels for warlike purposes, without his majesty’s licence.’ The main ground of objection to it was its bearing upon the contest which Spain was still carrying on in South America; great numbers of Englishmen were now in the service of the several states there which had declared or made good their independence; and the present measure was looked upon as being in effect and substantially a blow aimed at those young communities yet struggling to achieve or to complete their emancipation, and a quite uncalled-for helping-hand held out to their old oppressor in its vain attempt to crush them. Finally, among the acts passed this session were, one to carry into effect a treaty recently concluded with the Netherlands for the suppression of the slave-trade, another to amend the act of the last session for carrying into execution the convention with Portugal on the same subject, and another to carry into effect certain commercial arrangements which had been made with Portugal and with the United States.

On the 1st of July, within a few days of the end of the session, Sir Francis Burdett, for the eighteenth time, made his annual motion on the question of parliamentary reform. All that he now proposed, however, was, that the House should pledge itself to take the state of the representation into its most serious consideration early in the next session of parliament. The motion was seconded by Mr. George

Lamb (younger brother of the late Lord Melbourne);* but neither he nor any other speaker who supported it professed to go along with the mover in the peculiar kind of reform which he advocated. Next to Sir Francis's own long and rambling oration, the most prominent speech of the evening was one delivered by Alderman Waithman. Some of the opinions that were expressed in various quarters are curious enough when read by the light of subsequent events. All the length, for instance, that Mr. Hume went on this occasion was to observe that the majority of the people of Scotland were favourable to a moderate reform, and that he should vote for the motion in compliance with the opinion of his constituents. Lord John Russell, again, though admitting the propriety of disfranchising such boroughs as were notoriously corrupt, and of restricting the duration of parliament to three years, could not support a motion 'that went the length of proposing an inquiry into the general state of the representation, because such an inquiry was calculated to throw a slur upon the representation of the country, and to fill the minds of the people with vague and indefinite alarms.' On the division, however, 58 members voted with Sir Francis, against 153. More success attended Lord Archibald Hamilton's efforts in the cause of Scotch burgh-reform. This question formed the subject of two of the most exciting contests of the session. The election of magistrates for the burgh of Aberdeen, in 1817, had been declared illegal by the Court of Session, in the same manner as the Montrose election of the year preceding had been; but in this case the crown, when applied to for a warrant to enable a new election to take place—the burgh had not been found to be disfranchised, as Montrose was—had granted one to the old magistrates to elect their successors as usual, in the face of a petition numerously signed

* Mr. Lamb has been returned for Westminster on the vacancy occasioned by the death of Sir Samuel Romilly, after a contest which lasted from the 13th of February till the 3rd of March, and which was distinguished throughout by the most violent proceedings on the part of the mob. His (then radical) opponent was the present Sir (then Mr.) J. C. Hobhouse; and the numbers at the close of the poll were—for Lamb, 4465; for Hobhouse, 3861; 38 votes were also given for Major Cartwright.

questing that zealous follower, as he then was, to come to him. When they met the next day, he directed Bamford to procure some ten or a dozen stout fellows to take their places in the pit on the evening of the following Monday, when he would again present himself in the theatre. On the appointed night Bamford was at the pit-door by six o'clock, accompanied by nine other Middleton cotton or silk weavers, picked men, each armed with a stout cudgel. The ten rough-looking country-fellows had attracted some notice as they passed through the streets. Bamford gives a graphic description of them, which we quote the rather, as it must be understood to set before us the writer's own personal appearance, at least in general outline: 'They were all young men—tall, gaunt, and square-built—long-legged, free-limbed, and lithe as stag-hounds; and as they went tramp, tramp, along the flags, people looked, startled, and looked again; while the observed ones, nothing noticing, went onwards like men who knew their work, and were both able and willing to perform it.' A crowd soon collected and filled the street in which the theatre stood; but any serious mischief was prevented by the prudent determination of the manager to have no performance that evening. Hunt, however, had his triumph, and one which suited his purpose as well, and was probably quite as much to his taste, as would have been any he could have had in a *mêlée* within the walls of the theatre. After some time a coach drove into the street, and on its being ascertained to contain the great popular champion and some of his friends, a loud huzza burst from the dense multitude. A few hisses were soon silenced. 'Hunt,' continues Bamford, 'then mounted the box, and, addressing the people, stated that the manager had written to him, saying there would not be any performance that night, and requesting, I think, that he would come up and try to get the people to disperse and go home. He next entered on some general topics, and, with singular bad taste, to say the least of it—for his impetuosity overran his judgment—he said the authorities only wanted a pretext to let the bloody butchers of Waterloo loose upon the people; and concluded by advising them to retire to their homes peaceably. We then gave three cheers, the carriage disappeared,

and the street was soon deserted. Our party went to the Robin Hood, where we were joined by a score or two of others, and we set to and caroused until midnight, and then returned home.'

The rest of the winter and the spring passed in quiet, and without any movement among the working-classes to excite alarm or uneasiness. As the year advanced, however, a growing depression in the labour-market was experienced in all the districts of the kingdom where the population was the most numerous. The biographer of Lord Sidmouth has printed a letter addressed to that minister, in December of the preceding year, by Lord Sheffield (Gibbon's friend), in which the writer, a very old man, but with his faculties still entire and active, and accustomed all his life to watch the fluctuations in the economical state of the country, reports his views both on the actual condition of things at that moment and on the prospects of the future. He cannot, he says, resist the pleasure of communicating the very satisfactory accounts he has received of the state of trade and manufactures from different parts, and especially from the neighbourhood of Birmingham, the rest of Warwickshire, and from Staffordshire. 'Both trade and manufactures,' he goes on to observe, 'are in a flourishing condition, and likely to improve still further. There appears to be little speculation beyond the regular demands of the different markets, men without adequate capital finding it almost impossible to procure credit; so that there is now no disposition to force a trade, and no injurious competition among the merchants to procure the execution of orders, and, consequently, wages are fair and reasonable.' In point of fact, however, although Lord Sheffield was correct in his belief that the season of unsafe speculation had passed away, he was too hasty or too sanguine in assuming that the mischievous results of the late extravagant overtrading were yet exhausted. It has been common to attribute the commercial pressure which was felt throughout the spring and summer of this year 1819, in whole or in part, to the measures that were taken by the legislature for the restoration of a metallic or at least convertible currency, and the contraction of the circulation to which the

bank is assumed to have been thereby driven in its own defence. Mr. Tooke has demonstrated the entirely imaginary nature of this theory by many facts and considerations, and especially by the fact that the bank did not reduce its issues during the period of the pressure, and that no such contraction of the circulation as is alleged then took place. The amount of Bank of England paper in circulation was, on the contrary, rather greater in August than it had been in February. The late excessive importations, however, were continuing to produce their natural effects, or rather the consequent and inevitable fall of prices was at last bringing down the speculators in great numbers; the bankruptcies in each of the six months from February to July inclusive were about double the ordinary average; credit sustained a shock; the interest of money rose; while the glut in the market of commodities obstructed the channels, the pressure in the money-market clogged the wheels of trade; finally, the market of labour came in for its share of the universal depression; employment became more difficult to be procured; wages fell. At the same time food maintained a high price; wheat, which had been at 80s. in February, had only fallen to 68s. 10d. in June, and had risen again to 75s. in August. The first meetings of the operative classes, accordingly, were called to consider the low rate of wages. Such were those of the gingham-weavers of Carlisle and the neighbourhood in the end of May. These were succeeded, towards the middle of the following month, by others at Hunslet Moor near Leeds, at Glasgow, and at Ashton-under-Lyne, which assumed more of a political character, but at which the distress under which the people were suffering still supplied the text of every speech, and parliamentary reform and other such measures were proposed and recommended chiefly as remedies for that. The agitation, however, grew bolder as it proceeded; and the government now began to look at what was going on with considerable anxiety and apprehension. Still no breach of the public peace had been committed. On occasion of the Glasgow meeting, which took place on the 16th, a large body of military was in readiness to act; the multitude which assembled on the Green that summer

afternoon amounted, it is supposed, to between thirty and forty thousand persons; but after going through their work, they dispersed as quietly as if they had been only three or four met together. What took place at this convention, however, illustrates the natural course of mob deliberation. The people, mostly poor cotton-weavers, either out of employment or working at the lowest wages, appear to have been drawn together in the first instance simply by the hope of getting something done which might better their condition; the resolutions proposed by the parties that had called the meeting, after a statement of the prevailing distress, concluded with a petition to the prince-regent to the effect that his royal highness would be graciously pleased to afford such of their number as wished it the means of emigrating to Canada, the emigrants engaging to repay the expense by yearly remittances of produce. But upon these original resolutions an amendment was moved, declaring that no good was to be expected from anything except annual parliaments, universal suffrage, and a diminution of taxation; speeches were delivered scouting alike emigration and petitioning, unless indeed the people, as was strongly recommended, would march in a body to London, and present their petition to the regent themselves; and in the end the amendment was declared to be carried, though the vote in its favour was obtained, as is alleged, only by its supporters having taken possession of the space immediately around the hustings, and knocking down the hats and uplifted hands of their opponents, whose peaceable disposition prevented them from resenting or resisting such treatment. The oratory at the Ashton-under-Lyne meeting—where the chair was taken by a person calling himself the Rev. Joseph Harrison, and one of the speakers was the self-taught, or rather untaught, medical practitioner, Dr. Healey, who makes so amusing a figure in Bamford's autobiography—was still more violent and extravagant. At another great meeting, which took place at Stockport on the 28th of June, the chairman was Sir Charles Wolseley, Bart., who appears to have made his *début* on this occasion. In an address which he delivered before descending from his post of honour, Sir Charles,

after swearing to be faithful to the cause of annual parliaments and universal suffrage so long as his heart's blood should flow in his veins, informed his admiring auditors that his political career had commenced in France, that he was one of those who mounted the ramparts of the Bastille, at the commencement of the revolution in that country, and that, if he did that for France, he should never shrink from attacking the Bastilles of his own country. At this meeting, one of the insignia displayed from the hustings was the cap of liberty on the top of a flag-staff. On that day fortnight, the 12th of July, another meeting was held at New Hall-hill, near Birmingham, where Sir Charles Wolseley was elected 'legislatorial attorney and representative' for that town. This transaction seems to have startled government more than anything that had yet taken place, and probably determined it not to stand any longer aloof. Indictments were now presented both against Wolseley and Harrison for seditious words spoken at the Stockport meeting, and, true bills having been found by the grand jury, Sir Charles was arrested at his own house of Wolseley Park in Staffordshire, on the 19th. On the 21st, a meeting was held at Smithfield in London, at which Hunt presided; it had been announced for some time, and was looked forward to with considerable apprehension; a strong force, both civil and military, was stationed at various points in the vicinity of the place; but the demeanour of the assembled people was perfectly peaceable from first to last. Here Harrison was arrested on the hustings by the same constable, Buck, who had taken Sir Charles Wolseley into custody two days before, and who the next day on bringing Harrison to Stockport, was there attacked by some of the friends and disciples of his prisoner, one of whom fired a pistol at him and lodged the bullet in his body.

Three remarkable innovations are particularised in the contemporary accounts as having distinguished the present stage of the popular movement. It is stated to have been now that the reformers first assumed the name of Radicals. We have given in a former page Bamford's account of the origin of female reform associations. 'An entirely novel and truly portentous circumstance,' says the *Annual*

Register for 1819, 'was the formation of a *Female* Reform Society at Blackburn, near Manchester, from which circular-letters were issued, inviting the wives and daughters of workmen in different branches of manufacture to form *sister* societies, for the purpose of co-operating with the men, and of instilling into the minds of their children "a deep-rooted hatred of our tyrannical rulers." A deputation from this society attended the Blackburn reform meeting, and, mounting the scaffold, presented a cap of liberty and an address to the assembly. The example of these females was successfully recommended to imitation by the orators at other meetings.' The Blackburn meeting here alluded to appears to have been held on the 5th of July. The third circumstance is the military training alleged to have been now practised by the reformers. There is, and can be, no dispute about the fact; the only question is as to the design or object of the practice. Numerous informations upon this matter were taken by the Lancashire magistrates, and transmitted to the government, in the first days of August. We find one of the magistrates writing to Lord Sidmouth on the 5th of that month, that 'the drilling parties increase very extensively.' On the 7th, several persons state upon oath, that 'in various parts of the neighbourhood of Bury there are nightly assemblies of great numbers of men, who meet together to learn and practise military training.' Other witnesses swear, on the 9th, to having seen the same thing going on in the neighbourhood of Bolton. Many of the informations relate to the drilling of a large number of persons on Sunday, the 8th, at Tandle Hill, near Rochdale. One of the informants speaks of a man who told him that he had been drilled there on that day, and that a similar meeting would take place on the Sunday following, but that that would be the last. These dates are very important. An impression was generally produced at the time that the training had been going on in secret for a long while, and that it was a part of the general tactics of the radical reform movement, the dark purpose of which was placed beyond doubt by the extreme care with which the practice had been concealed for many months. But there is in fact no evidence whatever to show that

anything of the kind existed anywhere previous to these first days of the month of August, and we have just seen that the persons engaged in the drilling themselves spoke of it with perfect frankness as far as appears, and without seeming to have any intention to deceive, as something that would be all over in a few days. It has all the look of having been merely a preparation for some particular occasion. That it was really nothing more we are assured by Bamford. It was, according to his straightforward account, adopted solely with a view to the great meeting to be held at Manchester on the 16th of this month. 'It was deemed expedient,' says Bamford, 'that this meeting should be as morally effective as possible, and that it should exhibit a spectacle such as had never before been witnessed in England. We had frequently been taunted by the press with our ragged, dirty appearance at these assemblages; with the confusion of our proceedings, and the mob-like crowds in which our numbers were mustered; and we determined that for once at least these reflections should not be deserved.' Of four injunctions issued by the committees, the observance of two—cleanliness and sobriety—was left to the good sense of individuals; that of the other two, order and peace, was provided for by general regulations. The drilling was the discipline adopted to secure order in their movements. 'These drillings,' Bamford adds, 'were also, to our sedentary weavers and spinners, periods of healthful exercise and enjoyment. . . . When dusk came, and we could no longer see to work, we jumped from our looms, rushed to the sweet cool air of the fields or the waste lands, or the green lane sides. . . . Or in the grey of a fine Sunday morn we would saunter through the mists fragrant with the night odour of flowers and of new hay and ascending the Tandle Hill, salute the broad sun as he climbed from behind the high moors of Saddleworth. . . . There was not any arms—no use for any—no pretence for any; nor would they have been permitted. Some of the elderly men, the old soldiers, or those who came to watch, might bring a walking-staff; or a young fellow might pull a stake from a hedge in going to drill, or in returning home; but, assuredly, we had nothing like arms about us.

There were no armed meetings; there were no midnight drillings. Why should we seek to conceal what we had no hesitation in performing in broad day? 'There was not anything of the sort.' We believe this to be the true account of the matter; and that the government, the magistrates, probably many of the informants of the latter themselves, and the public in general, were frightened by an imagination of what had no existence. The drilling, whatever it might have led to, or have become if allowed to go on, had not, as far as it had yet gone, anything of the character ascribed to it. It was neither a clandestine nor an armed drilling. Whether or no it was a thing which the law should have allowed, is another question. It was perhaps liable to be abused, or carried out to purposes very different from its original one. Bamford himself admits that it had its seductions and dangers, or at least its liabilities to misconstruction, both by lookers-on, and, in some degree, even by those engaged in it. 'Some extravagances,' he observes, 'some acts, and some speeches, better let alone, certainly did take place. When the men clapped their hands in "standing at ease," some would jokingly say it was "firing," whilst those who were sent to observe us—and probably we were seldom unattended by such—and who knew little about military motions, would take the joke as a reality, and report accordingly; whence probably it would be surmised that we had arms, and that our drillings were only preparatory to their more effective use.'

We are now come to the great event of the year, and the most memorable incident in the history of these popular movements. The election of Sir Charles Wolseley at Birmingham appears to have suggested a similar proceeding to the reformers of Manchester. Mr. Hunt, we suppose, must have been the person who was to have had the honour of being elected legislative attorney for that town. On Saturday, the 31st of July, an advertisement was published in the *Manchester Observer*, inviting the inhabitants to meet on Monday, the 9th of August, in 'the area near St. Peter's Church,' for the purposes of choosing a representative, and of adopting Major Cartwright's plan of parliamentary reform. The magistrates

immediately put forth placards, declaring the intended meeting to be illegal, and warning the people to abstain from attending it at their peril. Upon this, on Wednesday, the 4th of August, the parties who had called the meeting announced in a hand-bill that it would not take place, but that a requisition would be addressed to the borough-reeve and constables, requesting them to convene a meeting at as early a day as possible, 'to consider the propriety of adopting the most legal and effectual means of adopting reform in the Commons House of Parliament.' This requisition was numerously signed in the course of the day. On its prayer being refused by the magistrates, the parties who had originally moved in the matter gave notice that the meeting would take place in St. Peter's Field on Monday the 16th. It was intimated that Mr. Hunt would take the chair.

All was now busier preparation than ever in every town and village around Manchester. It is remarkable that the great manufacturing metropolis itself seems to have remained comparatively unaroused, and not to have contributed anything like its due proportion of numbers to the mighty reform gathering. Indeed, while bodies of three, four, or five thousand persons are spoken of as pouring in from almost every one of the two-and-thirty points of the compass, and every separate neighbouring district was represented on the ground by its dense and extended array, we do not recollect that any distinct body of Manchester reformers is mentioned at all. Some of the accounts, indeed, expressly state that the Manchester working-people generally took little part in the demonstration, and that such of them as joined the crowd seemed to have come for the most part only as lookers-on.

We believe that Bamford's animated description of the procession of his fellow-townsmen, the reformers of Middleton, who put themselves under his guidance, conveys a fair impression of the spirit in which the affair was entered upon by the generality of those engaged in it. By eight o'clock on that Monday morning, he tells us, the whole town of Middleton was on the alert. Those who did not intend to go to the meeting came out at least to see the procession. The marshalled array was headed by twelve

youths in two rows, each holding in his hand a branch of laurel, 'as a token,' says Bamford, 'of amity and peace;' and therefore, we must suppose, representing the olive on this occasion. There were two silk flags, the one blue, the other green, with 'Unity and Strength,' 'Liberty and Fraternity,' 'Parliaments Annual,' and 'Suffrage Universal,' inscribed on them in letters of gold; and a cap of liberty, of crimson velvet, with a tuft of laurel, was borne aloft between them. The men marched five abreast, every hundred having a leader distinguished by a sprig of laurel in his hat; over these centurions were superior officers similarly decorated. Bamford himself, as conductor of the whole, walked at the head of the column, with a bugleman by his side to sound his orders. Before setting out, the entire number, of not less than three thousand men, having formed a hollow square, while probably as many more people stood around them, and silence having been obtained, Bamford shortly addressed them. After expressing his hope that their conduct would be marked by a steadiness and seriousness befitting the important occasion, he requested them 'not to offer any insult or provocation by word or deed, nor to notice any persons who might do the same by them, but to keep such persons as quiet as possible; for, if they began to retaliate, the least disturbance might serve as a pretext for dispersing the meeting. If the peace-officers, he added, should come to arrest himself or any other person, they were not to offer any resistance, but to suffer them to execute their office peaceably. He also told them that, in conformity with a rule laid down by the committee, no sticks or weapons of any description would be allowed to be carried in the ranks; and those who had such were requested to put them aside. Many sticks, he states, were in consequence left behind, and only a few walking-staves were retained by the oldest and most infirm. There is reason, however, to believe that sticks were carried to the meeting in greater numbers by some of the other parties. 'I may say with truth,' continues Bamford, speaking of the body under his own command, 'that we presented a most respectable assemblage of labouring-men; all were decently though humbly attired; and I noticed not even one who did not exhibit a white

Sunday's shirt, a neckcloth, and other apparel, in 'the same clean, though homely, condition.' After their leader's speech, which was received with cheers, they resumed their marching order, and, the music having struck up, set out at a slow pace. They were soon joined by the Rochdale people, the united numbers making probably six thousand men. A hundred or two of women, mostly young wives, preceded the column; about as many girls, sweethearts of the unmarried lads, danced to the music, or sung snatches of popular songs; even some children went forward with them, although a score or two of others were sent back; while some hundreds of stragglers walked alongside. As they proceeded they received various accessions to their ranks. At Newton, not far from Manchester, Bamford was beckoned to by a gentleman to whom he was known, one of the partners in a firm in whose employment the reform leader had lately been. Taking Bamford's hand, he said kindly, though in a tone expressing some anxiety, that he hoped no harm was intended by all those people that were coming in. Bamford replied that he would pledge his life for their entire peaceableness. 'I asked him,' he continues, 'to notice them: did they look like persons wishing to outrage the law? Were they not, on the contrary, evidently heads of decent working families, or members of such families?' "No, no," I said, "my dear sir, and old respected master, if any wrong or violence take place they will be committed by men of a different stamp from these." He said he was very glad to hear me say so; he was happy he had seen me, and gratified by the manner in which I had expressed myself. I asked, did he think we should be interrupted at the meeting? He said he did not believe we should. "Then," I replied, "all will be well;" and, shaking hands, with mutual good wishes, I left him, and took my station as before.' After they had entered Manchester, they heard that, among other parties which had preceded them, the Lees and Saddleworth Union had been led by Dr. Healey, walking before a pitch-black flag, with staring white letters, forming the words: 'Equal Representation or Death,' 'Love'—two hands joined, and a heart; all in white paint, and presenting one of the most sepulchral-looking objects that

could be contrived. 'The idea,' observes Bamford, 'of my diminutive friend leading a funeral procession of his own patients—such it appeared to me—was calculated to force a smile even at that thoughtful moment.' They seem to have reached the place of meeting, where they found an immense multitude already collected, about half an hour before noon. As other parties successively arrived, they became more and more enclosed, till they finally stood about the centre of the vast multitude. About half an hour after their arrival, reiterated shouts proclaimed the near approach of the great man of the day; Hunt came, preceded by a band of music, and flags flying, standing up in an open barouche, on the box of which sat a woman, who, it afterwards appeared, had made no proper or original part of the show, but had only been hoisted into the carriage as it passed through the crowd, while a number of his male friends were seated around him. 'Their approach,' says Bamford, 'was hailed by one universal shout from probably eighty thousand persons. They threaded their way slowly past us, and through the crowd, which Hunt eyed, I thought, with almost as much of astonishment as satisfaction.' The hustings, erected upon two waggons, stood close to the place where Bamford and his party were posted.

The arrangements made by the authorities for the part they were to act, on the other hand, are to be found authentically detailed in the communications addressed by themselves at the time to the government, which were afterwards laid before parliament, in the evidence given on the subsequent trial of Hunt and his associates at York, and most distinctly in a valuable and interesting narrative of the events of the day, furnished to the biographer of Lord Sidmouth by Sir William J. H. Jolliffe, Bart., M.P., who, as a lieutenant of the 15th hussars, was himself an actor in the scene he has described. A numerous committee of magistrates of the county had been constantly sitting since Saturday morning, taking depositions, and considering what they should do. It seems to have been upon considerable hesitation that they resolved not to attempt to prevent the meeting, but to defer the execution of a warrant which was issued for the arrest of the leaders,

where the magistrates were. The yeomanry, being nearest at hand, made their appearance first. They came from Mosley Street. These must have been the troops that were seen by Bamford as he was retiring from the ground with a friend to get some refreshment. 'I stood on tip-toe,' he says, 'and looked to the direction whence the noise proceeded, and saw a party of cavalry in blue and white uniform come trotting sword in hand round the corner of a garden-wall, and to the front of a row of new houses, where they reined up in a line.' This was in front of the house where the magistrates were. Mr. Hulton says that the troop came up at a quick pace, and that, the moment they appeared, the crowd set up a tremendous shout. The shout, as Bamford understood it, was one of good-will. It appears that, when Hunt first saw the confusion, he exclaimed that it was some trick, meaning, perhaps, an attempt to frighten the meeting, and called to the people to be firm, and to give three cheers, which was done. All parties agree that after the people had shouted, the yeomanry, who had now halted about three minutes, waved their swords and advanced. There are contradictory accounts of the pace at which they endeavoured to move forward; in point of fact, they appear to have penetrated the dense crowd not in a body at all, or in any kind of marching order, but singly and separately. Of course they were soon brought to a stand. This was the state in which things were when the two squadrons of hussars came up, having made their way round by the west side of the field. 'It was then,' says Sir W. Jolliffe, 'for the first time that I saw the Manchester troop of yeomanry; they were scattered singly, or in small groups, over the greater part of the field, literally hemmed up, and wedged into the mob, so that they were powerless either to make an impression or to escape: in fact, they were in the power of those whom they were designed to overawe; and it required only a glance to discover their helpless position, and the necessity of our being brought to their rescue.' Here, then, was the second device of the magistrates for the execution of the warrant utterly baffled; their first notion was to intrust it to Nadin, the constable, who told them that to execute it with the force at his

command was impossible; and now the troop of armed yeoman, which was next tried, and which had actually made the attempt, was stuck fast, and could neither advance nor retreat. Mr. Hulton's own account is that, at the moment when the hussars arrived, he conceived the Manchester yeomanry to be completely beaten. When Colonel L'Estrange, he says, asked him what he was to do, he exclaimed: 'Good God, sir, do you not see how they are attacking the yeomanry? Disperse the crowd.' On this the word 'Forward' was instantly given, the trumpet sounded, and the cavalry dashed among the multitude. Their charge swept everything before it. 'People, yeomen, and constables,' says Sir W. Jolliffe, 'in their confused attempts to escape, ran one over the other; so that, by the time we had arrived at the end of the field, the fugitives were literally piled up to a considerable elevation above the level of the ground.' As soon as he had given his orders to Colonel L'Estrange, Mr. Hulton tells us he left the window, because he 'would rather not see any advance of the military.' The hussars generally, Sir W. Jolliffe states, drove the people forward with the flats of their swords; 'but sometimes,' he adds, 'as is almost inevitably the case when men are placed in such situations, the edge was used, both by the hussars, and, as I have heard, by the yeomen also; but of this latter fact, however, I was not cognizant; and, believing though I do that nine out of ten of the sabre wounds were caused by the hussars, I must still consider that it redounds highly to the humane forbearance of the men of the 15th, that more wounds were not received, when the vast numbers are taken into consideration with whom they were brought into hostile collision.' There can be no doubt, however, as he observes, that 'the far greater amount of injuries arose from the pressure of the routed multitude.' The scene during the few minutes that it took to effect the dispersion must have been terrific in the extreme. Bamford, who does not distinguish between the advance of the yeomanry and that of the hussars, and whose situation did not allow him to do so, has described it with perhaps a little rhetorical licence in some particulars, but with probably little exaggeration of the general effect. 'Stand fast,' he called out to those

around him, when he saw the troops darting forward; 'they are riding upon us; stand fast.' 'And there was a general cry,' he says, 'in our quarter, of "Stand fast." The cavalry were in confusion: they evidently could not, with all the weight of man and horse, penetrate that compact mass of human beings; and their sabres were plied to hew a way through naked held-up hands and defenceless heads; and then chopped limbs and wound-gaping skulls were seen; and groans and cries were mingled with the din of that horrid confusion. "Ah! ah!" "For shame! for shame!" was shouted. Then "Break! break! They are killing them in front, and they cannot get away!" and there, was a general cry of "Break! break!" For a moment the crowd held back as in a pause; then was a rush, heavy and resistless as a headlong sea, and a sound like low thunder, with screams, prayers, and imprecations from the crowd, moiled and sabre-doomed, who could not escape. In ten minutes from the commencement of the havoc, the field was an open and almost deserted space. The sun looked down through a sultry and motionless air. The hustings remained, with a few broken and hewed flag staves erect, and a torn and gashed banner or two dropping; whilst over the whole field were strewn caps, bonnets, hats, shawls, and shoes, and other parts of male and female dress, trampled, torn, and bloody. Several mounds of human beings still remained where they had fallen, crushed down and smothered. Some of these still groaning, others with staring eyes, were gasping for breath; and others would never breathe more. All was silent, save those low sounds, and the occasional snorting and pawing of steeds. Persons might sometimes be noticed peeping from attics and over the tall ridgings of houses, but they quickly withdrew, as if fearful of being observed, or unable to sustain the full gaze of a scene so hideous and abhorrent.' About thirty wounded persons were carried to the infirmary in the course of that afternoon and the following day; and about forty more were able to come themselves to have slighter injuries looked at and dressed. There were, no doubt, some cases besides that were not heard of. The greater number of the injuries were contusions or fractures; the cases of sabre wounds do not

appear to have been more than twenty or thirty. Three or four persons were wounded on the evening of the fatal day by the fire of one of the regiments of foot, which was ordered to clear the streets where the people had re-assembled in great numbers and their conduct had begun to be threatening. Altogether the number of lives lost appears to have been five or six, including one of the special constables, ridden over by the hussars, and one of the Manchester yeomen, struck off his horse by a brickbat, and who had his skull fractured either by the blow or the fall.

Hunt and some eight or ten of his friends were seized by the first of the military who came up to the hustings; and, being brought up before the magistrates on the Friday following, were then remanded on a charge of high treason. On that day week, however, by which time Bamford and one or two others who had made their escape on the day of the meeting had been apprehended, having been brought up again, they were informed that government had for the present abandoned that charge, and that they would be only detained till they should find bail, to be tried for the misdemeanour of having conspired to alter the law by force and threats.

CHAPTER XVII.

Conduct of the Manchester Magistrates—Conduct of the Government—General Excitement—Session of Parliament—Death of George III.

THE Manchester Massacre, as it came very generally to be designated, was at once felt on all hands to have made an epoch in the history of the contest with Radicalism. A new scene of that drama had commenced. Other feelings were called up, and a change was to come over the course of action, on both sides. The Manchester magistrates themselves were probably as much astonished as anybody at what they had done. Many other Radical meetings had been held in all parts of the country, but nothing had

happened at any of them like what had taken place here. The dispersion of a popular meeting by armed force, on the ground solely of its being formidable from its numbers, might be a legal proceeding, but similar circumstances had again and again occurred of late without its having been adopted. Why should not this meeting have been allowed to be held without being so interfered with, as well as any of those that had preceded it? Could not the public safety have been as effectually preserved now as on so many former occasions, merely by the necessary preparations being made for repressing any outbreak on the part of the people, if such should be attempted? Or, if the arrest of Hunt and his associates was necessary or expedient, could that object not have been effected in another way? If it would have been too hazardous for Nadin, the peace-officer, to have attempted to apprehend them during the meeting, as Harrison had been apprehended a few weeks before without difficulty at Smithfield, might they not have been easily seized at any time either before the meeting or after it? These and other such questions could not fail to suggest themselves. But, above all, they must have been conscious—for it is undeniable, and is, indeed, as good as confessed—that, after all their two days' deliberation, they had allowed the morning of the day of meeting to come upon them without being prepared with any determined plan of action. Their notion of being guided by circumstances was manifestly nothing more than a vague hope that something might happen to deliver them in some way or other from their indecision and perplexity, and compel them, as it were, to take some particular course. Accordingly, we see them standing aloof and doing nothing as long as they can. They neither attempt to prevent the meeting taking place, nor to arrest the popular leaders on their way to it. Then, one favourable opportunity having thus been let slip after another, they clutch as if in desperation at what seems their last chance of doing anything. It is determined that the forty Manchester yeomen shall attempt to walk their horses up to the hustings through the densely packed and all but impenetrable multitude, whose closing around each, and separating him from his comrades, as soon as he had moved

determined the government, under the advice of the law-officers, to notify immediately their sanction of what had been done. The statement which Lord Sidmouth afterwards made in parliament was, that the account of what had taken place at Manchester reached ministers on Tuesday night; that on Wednesday one of the magistrates, accompanied by another gentleman, arrived in town to give the government the fullest information on all the circumstances; that a cabinet-council was immediately summoned, at which the attorney and solicitor general were present; that the two gentlemen from Manchester gave minute details of everything; and that the law-officers then gave it as their opinion that the conduct of the magistrates was completely justified by the necessity under which they acted. It appears that the first thing the home secretary did upon this was to write to the prince-regent. The reply of his royal highness was despatched by Sir Benjamin Bloomfield on the 19th, from the *Royal George* yacht, off Christchurch. It conveyed the regent's 'approbation and high commendation of the conduct of the magistrates and civil authorities at Manchester, as well as of the officers and troops, both regular and yeomanry cavalry, whose firmness and effectual support of the civil power preserved the peace of the town on that most critical occasion.' Lord Sidmouth then, on the 21st, addressed letters to the Earls of Derby and Stamford, the lords-lieutenant of Lancashire and Cheshire, intimating that he had been commanded by the prince-regent to request that their lordships would express to the magistrates of the two counties who were present at Manchester on the 16th, 'the great satisfaction derived by his royal highness from their prompt, decisive, and efficient measures for the preservation of the public tranquillity.' Lord Sidmouth's defence of the course he thus took is stated as follows by his biographer: 'Lord Sidmouth was aware that this proceeding would subject him to the charge of precipitation; but he was acting upon what he considered an essential principle of government—namely, to acquire the confidence of the magistracy, especially in critical times, by showing a readiness to support them in all honest, reasonable, and well-intended acts, without inquiring too

minutely whether they might have performed their duty a little better or a little worse. So impressed was his lordship with the importance of this principle, that he constantly declared in after-life, that, had the question recurred, he should again have pursued a course the policy of which was not less obvious than its justice. If, indeed, the government had left those magistrates exposed to the storm of popular indignation, until the verdict against Hunt and his associates in the succeeding year had demonstrated the legality of their conduct,* the magistracy at large must, from the dread of abandonment, have failed in duty towards that royal authority, which either could not or would not stand by them in the hour of peril; and thus, in all probability, the most calamitous consequences would have ensued.' It would appear, however, that although the home secretary had the concurrence of his colleagues in the step which he took, they were not unanimous in adopting the view upon which he acted. Mr. Twiss has published a remarkable letter of Lord Eldon's to his brother Sir William Scott, without date, but evidently written about this time, in which his lordship says: 'Without all doubt the Manchester magistrates must be supported; *but they are very generally blamed here. For my part, I think if the assembly was only an unlawful assembly, that task will be difficult enough in sound reasoning.* If the meeting was an overt act of treason, their justification is complete.' Eldon, who goes on to say that he was clearly of opinion that the meeting was an overt act of treason, and that the previous Birmingham meeting was the same—his argument being, as he afterwards stated it in the House of Lords, 'that numbers constituted force, and force terror, and terror illegality'—pressed for having the prisoners indicted for treason, but was, as we have seen, overruled. It was, it seems, on the 25th that Lord Sidmouth informed the regent that the evidence against Hunt and his associates 'did not afford sufficient ground for proceeding against them for high treason; but that it

* The legality of the conduct of the Manchester magistrates was not one of the questions at issue on Hunt's trial, nor of course was it either demonstrated or noticed in any way whatever in the verdict on that occasion.

daring resolutions passed. It was evident that a more resolute and dangerous spirit than ever had been awakened in the popular mind. Yet it is worthy of remark that no attempt was anywhere made by the authorities to repeat the course which had been taken by the Manchester magistrates, unless we are to except an uncalled-for interference with a meeting held, about the middle of September, at Paisley, which produced a state of disturbance and riot that lasted for three days, and, having extended to Glasgow, was not put down without the military having been called out and employed in both towns. All the other meetings that were held, both assembled and dispersed in peace. But the state of feeling that everywhere prevailed among the operatives was such as excited the greatest anxiety and apprehension. The communications received by government represented the country as being almost on the eve of an insurrection. Indeed, ministers were led at one time to believe that a plan had been arranged for a general rising on a particular day (the 1st of November). The facts may have been exaggerated in many cases by design or by fear; but that the popular temper was in a highly combustible and alarming state, there can be no doubt.

A dissatisfaction with the existing laws for the repression of sedition was one of the first feelings inspired in ministers and many of their adherents by the events of the 16th of August at Manchester. So early as on the 19th of that month, Lord Redesdale, in a letter to Lord Sidmouth, while maintaining the very strong doctrine, that 'every meeting for radical reform was not merely a seditious attempt to undermine the existing constitution of government by bringing it into hatred and contempt, but was an overt act of treasonable conspiracy against that constitution of government including the king as its head,' admits that 'something more explicit was now required,' and suggests that a declaratory law should be passed, 'to remove all doubt of the treasonable criminality of such assemblies.' About the same time we find Lord Eldon writing to his brother: 'In fact, the state of our law is so inapplicable to existing circumstances, that we can't meet the present case; and I am as convinced as I am of my existence, that if parliament don't forthwith

assemble, there is nothing that can be done but to let those meetings take place, reading the Riot Act if there be a riot at any of them.' Lord Sidmouth accordingly, early in September, proposed to Lord Liverpool that parliament should be assembled as soon as possible. The premier was then opposed to the suggestion; a cabinet-council, which met on the 15th of September, came to no decision; another, which met on the 21st, decided against Sidmouth's views; but at a third meeting, on the 8th of October, an order for the assembling of parliament on the 23rd of November was agreed upon.

The session was accordingly opened on that day by the prince-regent in person. Amendments to the address were moved by the opposition in both Houses, and long debates ensued—that in the Commons extending over two nights, and till five o'clock in the morning of the third day; but the ministerial majorities on the division were 159 to 34 in the Lords, and 381 to 150 in the Commons. A collection of papers relative to the internal state of the country having then been presented by command of the prince-regent, four bills were introduced in the Lords on the 29th of November; one by the lord chancellor, entitled: 'An Act to prevent Delay in the Administration of Justice in Cases of Misdemeanour;' the three others, by Lord Sidmouth, entitled, severally: 'An Act to prevent the Training of Persons to the Use of Arms, and to the Practice of Military Evolutions and Exercise;' 'An Act for the more effectual Prevention and Punishment of Blasphemous and Seditious Libels;' and 'An Act to authorise Justices of the Peace, in certain disturbed Counties, to seize and detain Arms collected and kept for purposes dangerous to the Public Peace; to continue in force until the 25th of March, 1822.' On the 3rd of December, Lord Castlereagh introduced in the Commons a bill entitled: 'An Act to subject certain Publications to the Duties of Stamps upon Newspapers, and to make other Regulations for restraining the Abuses arising from the Publication of Blasphemous and Seditious Libels;' and on the 17th of that month, Lord Sidmouth introduced in the Lords a bill entitled: 'An Act for more effectually preventing Seditious Meetings and Assemblies; to continue in force until the end of the

sale of plaster-casts, and who gave information of a desperate plot against the ministers. This information was, of course, immediately communicated to Lord Sidmouth. Edwards was taken into the pay of the home office; and the police were employed to verify his statements during the months when he stimulated the purposes of the conspirators, and received their confidence, in order to betray them, day by day, to his paymasters. It was after the affair became known to the government, that an emissary of Oliver the spy appeared at Middleton and elsewhere, and told of other agents who were going about the country with the same commission—to engage the discontented to join in the plot of Thistlewood and his comrades to assassinate the ministers, seize the Bank, the Mansion-house, and the Tower, and establish a provisional government. The discontented refused to join. The scheme was too horrible and too foolish. In the end it appeared that the number involved was very small; so small, that the affair would scarcely deserve a place in history, but for the atrocity of the plan, and the illustration the event affords of the working of the spy-system adopted by the government of the day.

The leader, Thistlewood, was a desperate man; too vindictive about his private wrongs to make much pretence of patriotism. He had been engaged with the Watsons, and acquitted on his trial for that matter. After his acquittal, he had sent a challenge to Lord Sidmouth; and this piece of audacity had procured him a year's imprisonment. He came out of jail thirsting for the blood of the minister. He drew about him a few ignorant and desperate men; and they would have attempted the deed at once—in the autumn of 1819—but for a series of accidents which delayed the enterprise, and gave time for an aggravation of their wickedness by the arts of Edwards the informer. When the affair had been delayed till Christmas, there came the dispersion of the intended victims for the holidays; and then the death of the king and the Duke of Kent, and the royal funerals; and, perhaps, Edwards, who furnished the party with so much information about the ministers, might have told the conspirators how uncertain was the tenure of office by their enemies, who were very

near going out immediately on the accession of George IV., on account of their refusal to procure him a divorce from his queen. The first record of the existence of the plot is in a note from the Duke of Wellington of the 5th of January, wherein he states, that he had 'just heard that Lord Sidmouth had discovered another conspiracy.' On Saturday, February 19th, it was resolved by the gang to murder the ministers, each at his own house; and without further delay, as their poverty would not allow them to wait any longer. On the Tuesday, however, Edwards informed them, that there was to be a cabinet-dinner at Lord Harrowby's the next day. Thistlewood sent out for a newspaper, to see if this was true; and, finding it to be so, remarked: 'As there has not been a dinner so long, there will, no doubt, be fourteen or sixteen there; and it will be a rare haul to murder them all together.' Thus it was settled. Some of their number were to watch Lord Harrowby's house, to see that no police or soldiers were brought there. One was to call with a note while the ministers were at dinner; and the others were then to rush in, to commit the murders, carrying bags in which to bring away the heads of Lords Sidmouth and Castlereagh. Then they were to fire the cavalry barracks, by throwing fire-balls into the straw-sheds; and the Bank and Tower were to be taken by the people who, it was hoped, would rise upon the spread of the news.

Edwards was not the only traitor. A man named Hidon, who afterwards found himself well recompensed by the gift of a hackney-coach, went from this final council to warn Lord Harrowby, by putting a letter into his hand during his ride in the Park. No notice was apparently taken. The preparations for dinner went on at Lord Harrowby's till eight o'clock in the evening; but the guests did not arrive. The Archbishop of York, who lived next door, happened to give a dinner that evening; and the arrival of the carriages deceived those of the conspirators who were on the watch in the street, till it was too late to give warning to their comrades, who had assembled in a stable in Cato Street near the Edgeware Road.

While the conspirators were arming themselves in a

room above this stable by the light of one or two candles, the ministers, having dined at home, met at Lord Liverpool's; where they awaited, in great anxiety, the tidings of what the police and soldiers had done. When the news arrived, it was bad. One of the police had been stabbed through the heart, and Thistlewood had escaped. This was owing to the soldiers not having been ready, as ordered, to turn out at a moment's notice. The police proceeded without them; and Smithers, the man who was killed, mounted the ladder which led from the stable to the upper room. Thistlewood stabbed him, and blew out the light; and after the exchange of a few shots in the darkness and confusion, several of the conspirators escaped. A reward of £1000 was immediately offered for the apprehension of Thistlewood; but he was taken before eight o'clock the next morning, in bed at a friend's house in Moorfields. When about fourteen of the conspirators had escaped, the soldiers arrived, and captured the remainder of the party—nine prisoners—and their arms and ammunition.

On the publication of the *Gazette*, the next morning, with the proclamation of the reward for the apprehension of Thistlewood, London was thrown into consternation, from the natural supposition that this plot was but the first movement of a great insurrection. But there is no evidence that it ever extended beyond the few desperate men who were immediately concerned in it. The vigilance of the government and the magistracy throughout the kingdom detected no more schemes of rebellion, though there were flying rumours from time to time of marches of armies of Radicals, who were to burn the towns and overturn the throne. Those who are old enough to have a distinct recollection of those times are astonished now to think how great was the panic which could exist without any evidence at all; how prodigious were the Radical forces which were always heard of but never seen; how every shabby and hungry-looking man met on the road was pronounced 'a Radical;' how country-gentlemen, well armed, scoured the fields and lanes, and met on heaths to fight the enemy who never came; and how, even in the midst of towns, young ladies carried heavy planks and

ironing boards, to barricade windows, in preparation for sieges from thousands of rebels, whose footfall was long listened for in vain through the darkness of the night. This imaginary state of the times was used by the alarmists as an argument against popular education (among other purposes to which it was turned); the plea being that the leaders of the Radicals, having circulated proclamations, must be able to write; and that this fact sufficiently proved the necessity of keeping the discontented dumb.

On the next Sunday, February 27th, the ministers publicly returned thanks for their preservation, in the Chapel Royal, St. James's. The king, who was at Brighton, recovering from his dangerous illness, was supplied daily with a minute account of the proceedings in regard to the conspirators. What he heard seems to have failed to convince him of the true causes and extent of the treasonable schemes of the day; for in the speech delivered by commission previous to the dissolution of parliament, on the 13th of March, the following notice is taken of the recent disturbances: 'Deeply as his majesty laments that designs and practices such as those which you have been recently called upon to repress, should have existed in this free and happy country, he cannot sufficiently commend the prudence and firmness with which you directed your attention to the means of counteracting them. If any doubt had remained as to the nature of those principles by which the peace and happiness of the nation were so seriously menaced, or of the excesses to which they were likely to lead, the flagrant and sanguinary conspiracy which has lately been detected must open the eyes of the most incredulous, and must vindicate to the whole world the justice and expediency of those measures to which you thought it necessary to resort, in defence of the laws and constitution of the kingdom.'

On the 20th of April, Thistlewood was condemned to death, after a trial of three days; and on the 1st of May, he and his four principal accomplices were executed. Five more who pleaded guilty had their punishment commuted to transportation for life; and one, who appears to have been present at Cato Street without being aware of the object of the meeting, received a free pardon. The question

which must next occur to every one is, what became of Edwards?

He was never punished; and to what extent he was rewarded has never been certainly known. That, after having been at the point of starvation, he was soon able to assist Thistlewood with 'some pounds' at need, is known; and that some of the conspirators attributed their treason to his instigation; and that he went about, giving away hand-grenades and divers weapons of atrocious device, and endeavouring to persuade many persons to blow up the House of Commons; and that he was not brought forward as a witness in the trials of the conspirators, nor himself ever arrested as a participator in their designs. On the day after the execution of Thistlewood, Alderman Wood brought forward a motion in the House, in regard to the conduct of this man; and renewed the subject on the 9th of May, adducing depositions from many persons which had been brought before him in his magisterial capacity, charging Edwards with the promulgation of horrible schemes for the destruction of the ministers and the parliament, and with many direct attempts to seduce needy men to join in those schemes. The information further showed that he had then been living for six weeks in great affluence, under an assumed name, in the house of a schoolmaster, in St. George's, Hanover Square, his host having no idea, till informed by Edwards himself, whom he was harbouring. No permission, however, was given by government for justice to overtake this wretch. The ministerial members enlarged on the necessity of employing such agency for government purposes in critical times; drew nice distinctions between the offices of spy and informer; disputed about the amount of Edwards's new affluence; ridiculed Alderman Wood, and his supposition that the home office would proceed against Edwards on the depositions furnished to Lord Sidmouth by magistrates; and finally negatived the motion for a select committee, to inquire into the conduct of this acknowledged traitor. From that time, Edwards disappeared; and nothing more was heard of him but an occasional rumour that he was living in Ireland, or on the continent, in ease and affluence. He escaped punishment from the hands of man; but his

case was so flagrant and so universally understood, that probably no one of the meanest of the sufferers from poverty and ignorance whom he endeavoured to seduce would have exchanged conditions with him, loaded as his name was with infamy, and his soul with the doom of his victims.

In Scotland, an outbreak occurred this spring. At the end of March, a vague alarm began to spread, of some approaching disturbance; and the peaceable work-people were visited by commands, from unknown quarters, to cease their work. On Sunday, April 2nd, a treasonable proclamation was found posted up on the walls all through Glasgow, inviting the people to effect a revolution, and commanding a cessation of all labour. On the Monday morning, everybody stood idle, to see what was going to happen; all, except the people of some cotton-mills, who went to work as usual, but dared not return after breakfast. Nothing ensued, except the calling out of the military and the preparations of the magistracy for defence against some attack of whose nature they were, and ever remained, entirely ignorant; for the alarm continued a mystery. Two days afterwards, one of the Stirlingshire Yeomanry was met, near Kilsyth, by a party of armed men, who demanded his weapons. Some shots were exchanged, and the man returned to Kilsyth. A detachment of twenty men was immediately sent out to scour the roads; and they found a party of rebels, about fifty in number, posted on some high ground in Bonnymuir. The rebels made some resistance, but were soon overpowered, some being wounded, and nineteen made prisoners. It appeared that most of these poor creatures had been tempted hither from Glasgow, in the expectation of joining an army of four or five thousand men, who were to take the Carron Ironworks, and thus supply themselves with artillery. On the side of the authorities, no death was caused but that of a horse; but the commanding-officer and three of his party were wounded. This is the affair which goes by the name of the Battle of Bonnymuir. Numerous arrests were made, in various parts of Scotland; but the excitement caused was not great, and soon at an end. In a few days, everybody was at work again, as if nothing had happened; and

the trials, which took place in July and August, engaged little attention. Of the persons convicted, all were pardoned except three; of these, two had been active at Bonnymuir, and the third was one of those reckless agitators who were, at that time, the curse of the suffering classes of society.

It was while the Cato-Street conspirators were lying in prison that the leaders of the Manchester movement—Hunt and his companions—underwent their trial, and received sentence. The intervening months had done much to undeceive some of Hunt's followers as to the character of their leader, and the prospects of any cause intrusted to such hands.

In the close intercourse of imprisonment and preparation for trial, Hunt lost all the attributes of the hero, with which the credulous imaginations of his admirers had invested him when he played the orator. One of these, his fellow-prisoner, declares that he could not endure to entertain an unworthy opinion of any of his comrades, and least of all of him who occupied such a position as Hunt's. 'I deemed all reformers as good as myself,' declares Bamford; 'and I knew that I could answer for the sincerity and disinterestedness of my own intentions. It was not until years had elapsed, that observation and reflection enabled me to penetrate the mist which had so long enveloped me; then it was that I became aware of the real nature of past transactions, and of the character of some who had been my political friends and fellow-workers in the cause of reform.' The evidence was pretty clear in the case of Hunt, as soon as he was lodged in Lancaster Castle, where he 'gave way to fits of impatience because no one appeared to bail him;' 'generally made use of the strongest terms he could, at the moment, command;' and showed 'exhibitions of violent feeling.' In London, it appeared that 'he became annoying and offensive, and his best friends were sometimes compelled to defend themselves by not being at home.' On his return from Lancaster to Manchester, as he sat 'on the box-seat,' the hero of the procession, there was that in his manners which made his ingenuous admirer 'almost doubt whether he who loved himself so well, could ever really love his

country for its own sake.' 'Hunt continually doffed his hat, waved it lowly, bowed gracefully, and now and then spoke a few kind words to the people; but if some five or ten minutes elapsed without a huzza or two, or the still more pleasing sounds: "Hunt for ever!" he would rise from his seat, turn round, and cursing poor Moorhouse in limbs, soul, or eyes, he would say: "Why don't you shout, man? why don't you shout? Give them the hip!"' When the hurrah was produced by the 'hip' of the panting and hoarse subaltern behind, 'he would resume his seat, and the bowing and hat-waving went on as before.' On the trial, when the defence was to begin in the afternoon, by which time the audience might probably be weary, Hunt reveals himself again to the humbler defendants: "'Now, Bamford, I'll tell you what you must do, if called this afternoon; you must talk against time."—"Talk against time! what's that?"—"You must talk to put on time, in order to prevent them from calling upon me, under any circumstances, to-night."'" Then came the denouncing in court of his friend Carlile, at that time under punishment; and next—the worst thing' his admirer 'ever knew him do'—slandering Mrs. Thistlewood. Here was enough: the charm of the mob-orator was dissolved. 'At times I had some difficulty to avoid laughing in Hunt's face; at times I was vexed at being a party in such a piece of contemptible vanity. I contrasted all this glare and noise with the useful results of calm, sober thought, and silent determination; and I made up my mind that, when once out of this, I would not, in future, be a party in such trumpery exhibitions—in the unworthy setting up of the instrument instead of the principle of a great cause.' This is but a fair representation of the relation between the demagogue and his followers in all critical times of any state; and if such critical times cannot but arise in every state from the inevitable inequalities of human condition, those have much to answer for who, by needlessly abridging liberty of popular speech and action, stimulate the powers of the demagogue, and the passions of the simple and ignorant, who know of no better leader.

The simple-minded men who had followed Hunt were

surprised, when brought into the presence of the privy-council, at the actual appearance and manners of the rulers of the land, whom they had regarded as their cruel persecutors. They found no cruelty and ferocity in the faces and demeanour of the tyrants; the 'good-looking person in a plum-coloured coat, with a gold ring on the small finger of his left hand, on which he sometimes leaned his head,' while eyeing the prisoners—Lord Castlereagh; or the person who addressed them—Lord Sidmouth—'a tall, square, and bony figure, upwards of fifty years of age, with thin and rather grey hair, forehead broad and prominent,' and whose 'mild and intelligent eyes' looked forth from 'cavernous orbits;' his 'manner affable, and much more encouraging to freedom of speech than' had been expected. Perhaps there was something of the same surprise on the other side. It certainly appears that the prisoners were treated with kindness and respect by the great men they had to deal with, from the home secretary to the police officials, when the parties were brought face to face. If they could have known each other better beforehand—their feelings, ideas, and interests—perhaps there would have been no Six Acts on the one hand, or Spa-fields and Manchester meetings on the other. As it was, the leaders and comrades of the discontented had to take their trial at York, on the 16th of this month of March, 1820; they were found guilty, and were to appear for judgment, in the Court of King's Bench, at the end of April. They were found guilty of unlawful assembling, for the purpose of moving and inciting to contempt and hatred of the government; and their sentences were various terms of imprisonment, in different jails, and the giving of large securities for future good behaviour. Hunt spent the next two years and a half in Ilchester jail, whence he sent forth incessant complaints of bad treatment—complaints which may fairly be considered as efforts, natural in such a man, to keep himself in the eye of the world, as his followers appear to have been satisfied with the usage they met with in their several places of confinement. Some of them learned certain lessons through the experience of their adventures which enlightened them as to the causes of social evils which they had hoped to remedy

by political action. 'They found on occasion of the trial that 'among us at York' 'the same really contemptible feeling of classism, the curse of England and Englishmen, and of Englishwomen also, existed in too great a degree among the witnesses. 'There were the "broad-cloth" and the "narrow-cloth" ones—the rich and the poor; and the former seldom sought opportunities for intercommunication with the latter, but rather shunned them.' The conclusion drawn is one which it is worth some suffering to arrive at: 'First of all, [for men] to respect themselves; next, to invite to a respectful equality by unoffending manners; and, thirdly, to assert their right position in society, by withholding the smallest deference to mere assumption. This would be quite sufficient without rudeness or noise to restore the natural balance of society.' Such conclusions arrived at by men whose action is a part of the history of their time, are a worthy subject of historical record.

One other trial, for the seditions of the preceding year, remained—that of Sir Charles Wolseley and a coadjutor, Mr. Harrison, for their conduct and speech at a meeting in favour of parliamentary reform, at Stockport, in July, 1819. The sentence was eighteen months' imprisonment, and the giving of securities at the expiration of the term.

With the new reign, new interests opened—interests so general, and admitting of such overt expression, that the spies and secret agitators who had, of late, become the curse of the country, found themselves driven from their diabolical game. They are not traceable among the scenes and movements which were now to engross the mind of the nation, and fix the attention of the world.

CHAPTER II.

Accession of George IV.—Position of the Queen—King's Marriage in 1795—The Queen Abroad—The Queen's Return—King's Message—Queen's Message—Commission agreed to—Lords' Report—Queen's Trial—The Defence—Abandonment of the Bill—The Queen's Law-officers—Prorogation—The Queen goes to St. Paul's—Her Claim to be Crowned—Her Death and Funeral.

THE one thing that men said to each other, in England and abroad, when they heard the news of the death of George III., was, that never had there been an accession to the throne more merely nominal. The new king had virtually reigned for eight years; his opinions and character, in the office of ruler, were well known; and there would be no change of ministry. There would be a royal funeral, a public mourning, a new parliament, and a new regal title; and that would be all. This saying, which appeared a truism, turned out not to be exactly true.

The king having died on Saturday, January 29, 1820, the meeting of the privy-council took place on Sunday, when the new sovereign declared his accession, and took the oaths; and on Monday he was proclaimed. For some days he had been ill; and almost before his proclamation was over, he was in a state of great danger from inflammation of the lungs. During that week there was an expectation that this would prove the shortest reign in English history—the sharpest lesson ever given as to the nearness of the throne to the grave; but after a struggle of nine days, the disease was overcome, and the business of a new reign proceeded.

The demise of the crown having happened during the parliamentary recess, the two Houses, in obedience to the bidding of the law in such cases, met immediately—that is, on the Sunday, when the Lords were sworn in. The Commons had to wait till Monday, for the return to town of the lord high-steward. After the administration of the oaths, both Houses adjourned to

the day after the royal funeral, which was to take place on the 16th of February. During this interval, while people in the streets were talking of the singular quietness and absence of change under this new reign, so that the resignation of ministers had been a mere form, those ministers were in daily expectation of being dismissed by their sovereign, while their heads were in hourly danger from Thistlewood and his gang, whose quarrel with them was as holders of the offices which they believed themselves about to vacate.

The king, while yet suspended, as it were, over the grave, was planning to begin life anew. He required peremptorily from his ministers that they should procure him a divorce; and they, unable to endure the idea of such a scandal, positively refused. On the 13th of February, Lord Sidmouth, in a note to Earl Talbot, in apology for not having written sooner, said: 'If you knew how the day was passed, you would not be surprised at the omission. The government is in a very strange, and, I must acknowledge, in a precarious state.' The ministers remained in office by a compromise on this point which afterwards cost them dear. They induced the king to drop the subject by pointing out the advantage of the queen remaining quietly abroad, which she would no doubt do if impunity from divorce were granted her on that condition; and they readily promised to gratify the king's wishes, if she should return to give any trouble. When they gave this promise, they little understood the woman they had to deal with, or the disposition of the English people to succour and protect the unhappy and oppressed, irrespective of the moral merits or demerits of the sufferer.

No pity can be too deep for the misfortunes of all the parties involved in the unhappy marriage which the king was now bent on having dissolved. In the early days when the young Prince of Wales had a heart which might have expanded and warmed under happy domestic influences, his feelings were cruelly dealt with; he was under the common doom of English princes, forbidden to marry where he loved. He was not gratified in his natural wish to travel abroad, where he might possibly

have seen some lady included within the provisions of the Royal Marriage Act whom he might have loved. He knew himself to be disliked by his parents; and it was almost inevitable that he should seek solace in an illicit love, and in extravagant pleasures. He loved Mrs. Fitzherbert; and plunged into debt so deep that it caused parliament two months' debate to settle how he should be extricated. By this debate, and some misunderstandings about his debts, his feelings were exasperated; and it was in a spirit of recklessness that he agreed to marry somebody—anybody—chosen for him by the king. He looked upon his marriage as a state necessity, and as an unavoidable method of getting his debts paid. The king decided that he should marry the Princess Caroline of Brunswick, the second daughter of the king's sister; and commands were sent to Lord Malmesbury, at Hanover, to repair to Brunswick, to ask the Princess Caroline in marriage for the Prince of Wales. No discretion was allowed to Lord Malmesbury—no time for observation—no opportunity for making any cautionary representations. All was considered settled before the negotiator saw the poor young creature who thought herself the most fortunate of princesses. 'All the young German princesses had learned English, in hopes of being Princess of Wales.' The tale of this courtship read now, after the event, is truly sad. The gay flights of the young bird before going into the net, and the closing down of her fate upon her, make the heart ache. 'The Princess Caroline much embarrassed,' says the Earl of Malmesbury in his diary, 'on my first being presented to her; pretty face—not expressive of softness—her figure not graceful. . . . Vastly happy with her future expectations. The duchess [the mother] full of nothing else—talks incessantly.' If this duchess could, for a single moment, have seen what she had to answer for in her miseducation of her daughter, it might have made her dumb with grief and shame, instead of talkative with triumph; but she was not a woman who could feel responsibility. She was no more able to think and feel on behalf of her daughter, than her brother, the King of England, on behalf of his son; and the wretchedness of their children in marriage was, therefore, assured

beforehand. As for the father, the Duke of Brunswick, 'he entered fully into her future situation—was perfectly aware of the character of the prince, and of the inconveniences which would result, almost with equal ill effect, either from his liking the princess too much or too little. He said of his daughter: "*Elle n'est pas bête, mais elle n'a pas de jugement—elle a été élevée sévèrement, et il le falloit.*"—(She is no fool; but she has no judgment. She has been severely brought up; and it was necessary.) He desired me to advise her never to show any jealousy of the prince.' As for this severity of training, Lord Malmesbury certainly thought less well of the method than those who had adopted it. He says: 'If her education had been what it ought, she might have turned out excellent: but it was that very nonsensical one that most women receive—one of privation, injunction, and menace.' And how had it issued. Her father observes, 'that his daughter writes very ill, and spells ill, and he was desirous that this should not appear.' 'Princess Caroline very *missish* at supper. I much fear these habits are irrecoverably rooted in her. She is naturally curious and a gossip; she is quick and observing, and she has a silly pride of finding out everything.' 'Argument with the princess about her toilet. She piques herself on dressing quick; I disapprove this. She maintains her point. I, however, desire Madame Busche to explain to her' what a neat toilet is. 'She neglects it sadly, and is offensive from this neglect.' 'It is remarkable how amazingly, on this point, her education has been neglected, and how much her mother, although an Englishwoman, was inattentive to it.' While such was her training, her natural qualities were good; and if they had had fair scope in private life, would have made her happy and beloved. 'Next to Princess Caroline at table,' says the diarist. 'She improves very much on a closer acquaintance; cheerful, and loves laughing.' On board ship, 'impossible to be more cheerful, more accommodating, more everything that is pleasant, than the princess; no difficulty, no childish fears, all good-humour.' A pregnant remark in this diary strikes the reader now as the sentence of her doom. 'Walk with Sir B. Boothby. We regret the apparent facility of the Princess Caroline's character,

want of reflection and *substance*; agree that with a *steady* man she would do vastly well, but with one of a different description there are great risks.' And while the Princess was 'vastly happy with her future expectations,' the King of England was writing to her mother that he hoped his niece would not have too much liveliness, and that she would lead a sedentary and retired life. 'These words shock the Princess Caroline,' Lord Malmesbury says. She heard of some other things, too, which had a sobering effect: 'It put a curb on her desire for amusement—a drawback on her situation, and made her feel that it was not to be all one of roses.'

How wretched it was to be, was too plain in a moment to the only witness of the first interview, Lord Malmesbury. The princess kneeled, as she had been instructed, and the prince raised her 'gracefully enough.' He instantly left her; and before she had seen any other member of the family, vented to the queen his dislike of the young stranger, whom he was to make his wife in three days. She, meantime, left thus alone, 'was in a state of astonishment,' and inquired whether the prince was always like this. She had but too much reason to know soon that, to her, he was to be always like this. Meantime, she found him very fat, and not nearly so good-looking as his portrait. Her only friend in England reports, that 'she was disposed to further criticisms on this occasion, which would have embarrassed me very much to answer, if luckily the king had not ordered me to attend him.' A more desolate creature than he left behind him never claimed pity from the lowliest who has any one to love.

The marriage ceremony took place three days after. Lord Malmesbury records that 'the prince was very civil and gracious; but I thought I could perceive he was not quite sincere, and certainly unhappy; and as a proof of it, he had manifestly had recourse to wine or spirits.'

Such was the marriage which the husband desired, as soon as he became king, to have dissolved. From the beginning he had attached his wife by no conjugal qualities; he had never respected her rights, or considered her

feelings; and it was, doubtless, a great relief to both when she went abroad to live—a step which she had taken some years before, in 1814. Careless as he had been of her rights and her feelings, he watched her conduct; and when rumours spread of infidelity on her side, he sent abroad, in 1818, a commission to collect evidence, and to observe her proceedings. It is not to be wondered at, if one who could not be made to understand anything of feminine reserve or royal dignity while yet in her father's house, should lay herself open to the criticism, both of enemies and ordinary observers, when her womanly feelings had, for a course of years, been outraged, and her genial affections repressed; when she had been long deserted by her husband, and separated from her child. Abroad, she escaped from the heartless set among whom she was doomed to dwell at home; and she enjoyed, the more by contrast, the freedom of continental manners. Whatever might be the truth about the extent of her indiscretions, her freedom was certainly more than her chief enemy, her husband, chose to permit. Their only child was dead, and now he was eager to render himself free for another marriage.

The wife was not unprepared for the persecution which now awaited her; for she had had more than one taste of it already. She had been sent to reside at Blackheath, in her early marriage-days, in a sort of court banishment; and there her most trivial proceedings were watched, and, at length, her servants were brought up before the Lords charged with the 'delicate investigation,' and closely examined, without any previous warning to their mistress or themselves. She was declared innocent of all serious offence; and the king, her father-in-law, would have invited her to court; but her husband would not hear of such an atonement. According to all the testimony of the time, she conducted herself extremely well under these trying circumstances.

Mr. Perceval was her adviser at that time; and at that time he made a mistake very injurious to her and to himself. He collected and had printed all the documents connected with the 'delicate investigation,' probably in the hope of damaging the prince and his friends; but he

been heard through every corner of the palace where her husband sat meditating his plans for her degradation. His mind could not have been more full of the contemplation than was that of almost every subject in his kingdom. 'This scandalous history,' writes Mr. Ward, just after that time, 'holds entire possession of men's minds, to the discredit, as well as the disadvantage of the country. Brougham's proposition, yesterday, seems a reasonable one, that certain days should be set apart for transacting the real business of the country.' The 'discredit,' the immoral influence, the obstruction to the public business, are imputable to the king, and those who had pledged themselves to support his proceedings, and who had driven a desolate creature so hard that she could not but turn to meet her pursuers. Lord Eldon talked of his conscience, as usual; while its operation seemed rather extraordinary to observers like Lord Dudley, in whose letters we find a remark on 'the example of the present lord chancellor, who, having kept her conscience then, keeps her offended husband's now—and all for the public good!'

From the moment of the announcement of the queen's approach, the cabinet councils had been frequent and protracted. The ministers met twice in a day, and remained in consultation for hours. While the multitude on the beach at Dover were shouting their welcome, the king was going in state to the House of Lords, which was unusually crowded, to give the royal assent to several bills already passed by his new parliament; and, after he had withdrawn, the expected communication from him was read by the lord chancellor from the woolsack. By this royal message, the king commended to the Lords an inquiry into the conduct of the queen, in order to the adoption of 'that course of proceeding which the justice of the case, and the honour and dignity of his majesty's crown, may require.' Lord Liverpool then laid on the table the green bag which contained the papers criminatory of the queen. Lord Castlereagh offered the green bag, and read the king's message to the other House. The Lords received the communication in silence, and adjourned, understanding that their address, in reply to the message, should be considered the next day. In the House of Commons,

there was some vehement speaking; and before Lord Castlereagh moved the address, the next day, Mr. Brougham read to the House a message from the queen, declaring that her return to England was occasioned by the necessity her enemies had laid upon her of defending her character; declaring that, for the fourteen years which had elapsed since she was first accused, she had steadily required the justice of a full investigation of her conduct; and demanding now a public inquiry, instead of that secret investigation before a select committee which was proposed by the ministers. 'She relies,' said the message, 'with full confidence upon the integrity of the House of Commons, for defeating the only attempt she has any reason to fear.'

Mr. Brougham took the management of the queen's business as her attorney-general. He had been recognised in this office, as Mr. Denman was in that of solicitor-general to the queen in the Court of Chancery, the Vice-chancellor's Court, and the Court of King's Bench, on the 20th of April preceding. Mr. Brougham had met the queen in France, on her approach; and from this time, her affairs were under the guidance of himself and Mr. Denman. They were her commissioners, as the Duke of Wellington and Lord Castlereagh were those of the king, in the negotiation which was now entered upon, after the appointment of the secret committee of inquiry in the House of Lords, in the hope of obviating the painful and demoralising investigation which had been proposed to both Houses of parliament.

It was the queen who, after a pause, first proposed this negotiation. As a preliminary step, she required and obtained full assurance that her doing so could not be interpreted as an act of quailing or retreat. The commissioners met, and agreed on the basis of their negotiation—that the queen should not be held to admit, nor the king to retract, anything. Of course, the failure of the negotiation was included in the very terms of this basis. The queen was willing to live abroad; and the king would agree to drop all proceedings against her; but she required two things which the king's commissioners refused to grant—the insertion of her name in the liturgy, or some equivalent which would save her honour; and a

29th of November she went in procession to St. Paul's, to return thanks for her deliverance from a great peril and affliction. Her reception was everything that could be wished, as far as the conduct of the vast multitude was concerned; and they did honour to her by the utmost propriety of bearing; but, within the cathedral, we stumble upon an incident characteristic of that time, but scarcely credible in ours. 'In the general "thanksgiving," the officiating clergyman, Mr. Hayes, one of the minor canons of St. Paul's, omitted the particular thanksgiving which, at the request of any parishioner, it is customary to offer up, and which it was understood her majesty desired might be offered up for her on the present occasion. It is said that Mr. Hayes refused, on the ground that the rubric directs that those may be named as returning thanks who have been previously prayed for; but that the queen, not having been prayed for, could not be named in the thanksgiving.' Thus, the same interdict which deprived her of the prayers of the nation, wrought to prevent her from returning thanks—a privilege which is commonly supposed to be the right of every worshipper within the Christian pale.

The life of this unhappy lady offers but little more for record; for the life itself was drawing to a close. When parliament met again, the time of the nation was largely occupied, and its temper tried, by discussions on the queen's affairs, caused by her continued exclusion from public prayers, and by recriminations on the inexhaustible subject of last year's prosecution. An annuity of £50,000 was provided for her, by act of parliament; and some attempts were made to obtain for her a share in the honours of the ensuing coronation. It was natural that one so long an outcast, and at length borne back into social life by the sympathies of a nation, should accept too much from those sympathies, and fail to stop at the right point in her demands. It would have been well if the queen had retired into silence after the grant of her annuity, and the final refusal to insert her name in the liturgy. Her demand to be crowned with the king, was, besides being properly untenable, far from prudent in regard to herself, or humane towards the king. He could

not meet her under such circumstances ; and the being crowned was not essential to her womanly honour, which was now as much vindicated and protected as it could ever be. Whether the claim to be crowned was or was not a false step in prudence and taste, there can be no doubt that the endeavour to obtain an entrance to the Abbey, to witness the ceremony, was a mistake. The queen was fairly turned away from the door, amidst contending utterances of derision, sympathy, and indignation at the exclusion. It was a piteous sight ; the personages 'on the leads,' 'in grotesque dresses,' drawn out of the procession to see the transaction ; and the 'fashionable ladies,' all with tickets, no one stopping to offer hers to the pausing queen, but all hurrying on, 'without taking the slightest notice of her ;' the people below, meantime, shouting her name 'with great enthusiasm.'

This was the last time of her giving trouble to her enemies, or perplexity to the fashionable who crossed her path, or smiles to the people whose hearts warmed towards her. She must have been often and long, if not perpetually, since the accession of the king, in a fever of spirits which could not but wear her frame. The tension of mind which she had now long undergone would have crazed most women, and could not be for ever sustained even by one of 'so little substance' and so much versatility as, following Lord Malmesbury's testimony to her early character, we may attribute to her still. Her mortification at the Abbey door happened on the 19th of July ; on the 2nd of August a bulletin was issued, which showed that she was seriously ill of internal inflammation. She was in no condition to contend with disease, and, on the 7th, she sank. It is testified that she said, with a mournful earnestness, on that last day, that she had no wish to live : 'I do not know whether I shall have to suffer bodily pain in dying ; but I shall quit life without any regret.' No wonder ! And who could wish that she should live ? At the best, her future years must have been forlorn. Supposing her conduct, and that of the people towards her, to have been all that could be wished, to the end of a long life, she would still have been a desolate being. To a woman it can never be enough to be a queen—much less

to be a nominal queen, under perpetual solicitude for the very name. That her long home opened to her thus early was an event of comfort to those who knew she could never have any other home, or any natural work or food for her domestic affections. Yet the news of her death—joyful enough to her husband, who was on a pleasure trip at the time—spread mourning over the land; and a countless multitude thronged to her funeral-procession. There were some riots on this occasion, caused by the determination of the people to have the hearse pass through the city; a point which they gained after some conflict with the soldiers, during which two men were killed by shots from the horse-guards on duty. After the lord mayor quitted the head of the procession, outside the city, the funeral company proceeded quietly enough to Harwich, where the body was immediately embarked for Stade, on its way to Brunswick. Times had changed since she arrived at the shores whence she thus departed; arrived, ‘vastly happy with her future expectations,’ with her prince’s portrait in her bosom, and a place on the greatest throne in the world within her view. She had soon found her prince ‘not nearly so good-looking as his picture;’ and she found the same thing in regard to the ‘prospects’ about which she had been so ‘vastly happy.’ For her the grave could never open untimely; and we see it open, as she did, ‘without any regret,’ though not without sadness. She had just entered her fifty-third year.

We have finished the story of Queen Caroline at once, that we might not have to recur to it, with pain, at intervals. We must now revert to the beginning of the year, and the early transactions of the new reign.

CHAPTER III.

Dissolution and New Parliament—State of the Country—Death of Grattan—Education—Capital Punishments—Agricultural Distress—Parliamentary Reform—Catholic Claims—Constitutional Association—King's Visit to Ireland—Coronation—Death of Napoleon.

ON occasion of the death of the sovereign, it is usual for the parliament—which may remain in existence for six months, if the new king so please—to provide for the civil list, and all the exigencies of government during the coming elections, and then be dissolved. On the death of George III., there was some anxious questioning as to what should be done, on account of the peculiar condition of affairs. The time of parliament had, thus far in the session, been almost wholly occupied with legislating against the disaffected; and the business of the country remained to be done. It could hardly be gone through during the six months; and a six months' canvass for the elections would be a serious evil to the country. It was clearly convenient, therefore, that, as the king's speech declared, there should be a new parliament called without delay. But the king and government wanted money, and supplies must be voted immediately; or, these matters of the purse would be subject to the dictation of the people at the elections. The Commons voted the supplies; the Lords acquiesced in the vote, expressly dispensing with the act of parliament properly necessary on such an occasion. Two other subjects were discussed; the position of the queen, and the issue of writs to four boroughs, against which gross corruption had been proved. Lord J. Russell carried through the Commons a bill to prevent the issue of writs to these four boroughs of Grampound, Penryn, Barnstaple, and Camelford. The bill was lost, by a majority of eleven, in the Upper House; but the incident shows that the question of parliamentary reform was, by this time, able to command attention in the most critical seasons. On the 28th of February, the parliament was

to do a benefit to mankind, which would exist and be widely felt long after that question—the queen's business—should have been determined; and long after the differences which existed between individuals, illustrious as they were, who were more immediately connected with it, should have been forgotten.' On the 28th of June was brought forward the first comprehensive and definite proposal for the education of the people of Great Britain. As has been recorded in a previous page, an education committee had been sitting since 1816, by whose labours a great mass of valuable information—of moral statistics—had been collected and made available; and Mr. Brougham had, at that time, declared his intention of bringing forward a scheme of popular education for London, under parliamentary sanction and control, before attempting to diffuse instruction over the whole country. In his present move, he said nothing of this former intention, but proposed a plan for the education of the entire population of 'the poor in England and Wales.'

The plan proposed by Mr. Brougham was never adopted; but the movement was not lost. No plan of general education of the poor has yet been adopted, and it is still impossible to see when such an event will happen; but the facts obtained and made known, the attention excited, the conviction of the necessity of education produced in a multitude of minds, which yet cannot agree to any scheme hitherto brought forward, have been, in themselves, a sort of education, in preparation for a higher and a better; and these date from Mr. Brougham's efforts in 1816 and 1820. If we have still too many marks instead of signatures, in parish registers, the proportion is much smaller than it was; if we still find old gentlemen, here and there, who exhort against the 'over-instruction of the people,' and ladies who refuse to take domestic servants who can read and write, we rarely meet, in towns and in ordinary middle-class society, with those alarms about the effect of the alphabet and the inkhorn upon the poor, which were common when Mr. Brougham rose to plead their cause.

According to his statement, the children requiring means of education were about one-tenth of the whole

population in England; whereas those provided with any means of education at all were only one-sixteenth (according to the most recent census, it was one-seventeenth); and if the number was deducted of those who received merely a decent training in regard to habits, which was all that dame-schools and other inferior schools could afford, the amount of effectual teaching would be found to be indeed miserably small. Large districts were destitute of all means of instruction whatever: in others, the Sunday-schools of the Dissenters, who had carried out the plan of Sunday-schools much more vigorously than the Church, were the only reliance; and, good as are the principle and plan, no weekly meetings for instruction can ever impart any considerable amount of knowledge, or supply the place of that training of intellect and habits which is a main element in what is called education.

The information obtained by the education committee was altogether from clergymen of the Established Church; and Mr. Brougham's plan provided for the schoolmasters being all members of that church; for their being elected on the recommendation of clergymen, together with that of resident householders; and for their qualification for the office, by taking the sacrament within a month of their appointment. These were proposals which could not be acceded to by Dissenters; and which, therefore, necessitated the rejection of the scheme. No scheme of popular education can ever become national, in this country, which gives the management of schools and the appointment of masters to the Church, while Dissenters constitute a large proportion of the inhabitants in almost every district, and especially in the most populous, where the Dissenters bear their full share in such education as already exists. This difficulty was immediately fatal to the measure, and has been so to every scheme proposed through succeeding years; the members of the Established Church insisting on direct religious instruction, as a part of the plan; and the Dissenters refusing either to subject their children to the religious instruction of the Church, or to pay for a system from which their children are necessarily excluded. Whenever all parties shall consent to establish a system of secular instruction, providing for the religious training

to be carried on in perfect freedom by the clergy and ministers of the respective denominations, the nation may enjoy a scheme of general education; but, evidently, not till then. Mr. Brougham's measure was dropped, after the first reading of the bill; but it answered a great purpose in rousing the mind of the nation to the most important subject which could occupy it; and it will ever remain memorable as the first express move towards the greatest achievement which still remains to be effected. This session was, the while, affording evidence of the need of popular enlightenment, and of the educational training which is afforded by the free discussion of social interests. We find petitions presented, from country districts, complaining of the operation of machinery in throwing people out of work; and, on the other hand, a large number of petitions in favour of an extension of freedom of trade.

Something was gained this year, in the direction of a diminution of capital punishment, by Sir James Mackintosh's success, in carrying three bills out of six which he brought forward in the place of the lamented Sir S. Romilly. By the passage of these bills, shoplifting to the value of five shillings ceased to be punishable with death—great as was the lord chancellor's apprehension that, by this relaxation, small tradesmen would be ruined, in the face of the clearest evidence that the severity of the law caused that offence to go almost invariably unpunished. There is something amusing, and certainly instructive, in looking back, after a few years, upon the records of the fears of legislators. Lord Redesdale was, on this occasion, alarmed at the proposal that men should no longer be put to death for blackening their faces in the commission of theft by night. The offence of stealing game and other articles by night remained punishable by fine and transportation; it was proposed to repeal that portion of the Black Act by which night-thefts, with blackened faces, were made punishable with death. Lord Redesdale told of the tax he and his neighbours had to pay—£200 a year, for a police of six men—to check deer-stealing on the borders of the forest; and he declared his fear that if men, already deer-stealers, were no longer to be hanged for blackening their faces, 'the practice among these depre-

dators would be universally resorted to.' He was supported by the lord chancellor, who actually succeeded in throwing out that clause of the bill. From this time forward, however, it was no longer a capital offence for an Egyptian to remain one year in the country; for a notorious thief to reside in Northumberland or Cumberland; for any one to be found disguised in the Mint, or to injure Westminster Bridge. The vagrant laws were now to be supposed severe enough for gipsies; and the laws which protected the southern counties to be sufficient for the northern. By the third of the successful bills, which was carried with some mutilation, several offences—some serious, and some no more so than the wounding of cattle and the sending threatening letters—were reduced from capital to simple felonies. But in no case were the offences of stealing on navigable rivers, and even the lighter kinds of forgery, permitted to be visited with punishment short of death. The bills regarding these crimes were necessarily withdrawn; no further advance was made, for some sessions, in substituting milder punishments for that of death. Sir James Mackintosh continued his efforts, year by year; but could only work out some preparation for future success. In his attempt in regard to forgery, in the session of 1821, he committed a mischievous oversight in inserting the forgery of Bank of England notes among those which were to remain punishable with death, as the forgeries of wills, transfers of stock, and marriage registers and licences. He yielded this point, on the ground of the seriousness of the offence of forging bank-notes; but he thus gave up the strong ground that the capital punishment was less effective than a milder one for the prevention of the offence, and enabled his opponents to regard him as considering the severer punishment the best for its object. All that was gained for three years was a pledge from the House of Commons in the session of 1822: 'That this House will, at an early period of the next session of parliament, take into their most serious consideration the means of increasing the efficacy of the criminal laws, by abating their undue rigour.' This resolution was adopted by a majority of 16, in a House of 218; and the 'loud cheers' which followed the announcement excited much expectation

throughout the country, as to the fidelity with which the Commons would redeem their pledge on the arrival of the session of 1823.

The restlessness of the country under 'agricultural distress' was in these days a perpetual, as commercial distress was a frequently recurring evil. It might really puzzle a visitant from another hemisphere to understand how it could be that, with regard to an article of the first necessity—an article inevitably produced, because inevitably consumed—the producers should be, for long courses of years, distressed and impoverished. 'From the commencement of the session of parliament (1820), numerous petitions on the subject of the existing agricultural distress had been presented to the House, stating in strong language the extent of the evil, and imploring parliament to apply a remedy.' The remedy applied for was, the raising of prices by the creation of an artificial scarcity; a project which it could not be expected that the great body of bread-eaters would agree to. A committee of inquiry was obtained by a sort of accident—by a number of too-confident members of the House having gone home, instead of waiting till the debate closed at four in the morning; but the government, who did not choose to open again the question of the corn-laws, managed to limit the function of this committee to the inquiry, whether the averages were obtained correct, so as to afford reliable information as to the prices of corn abroad? In 1821, 'the agricultural distress of the present year was not inferior to that of 1820. No new causes of embarrassment had sprung up, but the price of corn still continued low;' landlords would not reduce their rents, and farmers had to pay their rents out of their capital. In 1822, 'the beginning of the present year was marked chiefly by the clamours of the farmers and landowners.' In 1823, 'the country exhibited the most unequivocal marks of a steady and progressive prosperity. Every branch of manufacturing industry was in a flourishing state.' Yet, though agriculture was in a somewhat less depressed condition, 'complaints were uttered, in various county-meetings held immediately before, or shortly after, the meeting of parliament.' These incessant groanings, wearisome to the ears, and truly distressing to

the hearts, of all listeners, were not borne away idly on the winds. They did not obtain from parliament the aid which the complainants desired, but they largely advanced the cause of parliamentary reform. If the agricultural interest had been in a state of high prosperity from 1820 to 1830, the great question of reform of parliament must have remained afloat much longer than it did, from the inertness or opposition of the agricultural classes; who, as it was, were sufficiently discontented with parliament to desire a change. Extraordinary as this may appear, when we regard only the preponderance of the landed interest in the House at that time, we shall find, on looking abroad through the country, that it was so. Such politicians as Cobbett presented themselves among the discontented farmers, and preached to them about the pressure of the debt, of a bad system of taxation, and a habit of extravagant expenditure; and of a short method of remedying these evils, by obtaining a better constituted House of Commons. It was no small section of the agricultural classes that assisted in carrying the question at last; and it would be interesting to know how many of that order of reformers obtained their convictions through the distress of these years.

Except by such advancement in political education as is wrought by adversity, and the discussion which it excites, the first year of the new king's reign cannot be called one of progress. No prosperity accrued to the people; and nothing was done by the government, which could redeem them from the odium of their proceedings in regard to the queen. The next session was more full of deeds and of promise, and some brightness of hope begins to dawn upon the dark scene of misrule and discontent in England. It was something that the question of parliamentary reform had now become so prominent as that three motions relating to it were discussed in the course of the session; besides that great meetings were held elsewhere, which kindled sentiment and stimulated discussion. Of these meetings, the most important was a dinner at the London Tavern, on the 4th of May, when speeches of great vigour were made by the leading reformers in the House of Commons, and when Dr. Lushington openly declared, and

year that the work was seen to be effectual; but the effort yielded inestimable fruits from month to month of the ten preceding years. During all that time, the people were learning to apprehend the value of that representative system which had been duly appreciated hitherto only fitfully and partially, and had still to be studied as a new lesson by the whole of the generation which had been occupied by the ideas of the war. The lesson was learned, soundly and thoroughly. The lowest of the people came to know something of the idea of citizenship; the instructed became animated with more vivid and definite conceptions of political duties and liberties; and the holders of aristocratic power, privilege, and interest—those who held much of the representation as a personal property, were strengthened and prepared for a sacrifice of political privilege and property, so noble as is even yet hardly appreciated, but will not fail to be admired and honoured as it ought through the unborn generations which will read history in the clear light of a future age. While the apprehensive and narrow-minded rulers of that period were shuddering over the revelations of the time, and writing to each other that ‘all that just and honest pride which once gave comfort and dignity to a state of existence in this country, is nearly cancelled and obliterated,’ that country was preparing to show how safe and how noble an abode it was for the principles of true liberty and impartial law, and how little was to be feared for a nation whose multitude desired to share in the responsibilities of legislation and order, and whose aristocracy could surrender ancient privilege and property at the summons of a new time. There had long been some among that aristocracy, enlightened and humane, who had been awake to this summons, and many among the multitude who had been impatient at its delay; but the effectual efforts which achieved the reform of parliament may be considered to have begun from this spring of 1821.

The avowals and incitements uttered at that dinner at the London Tavern on the 4th of May, spread through the land, being preceded by one, and followed by two more distinct movements in parliament. That movements in parliament were instigated and supported by the country

is evident enough—not only from the obvious truth that no order, or corporate or assembled body, ever reforms itself without pressure from without, but from the number of petitions for reform which we find sent up to the House during this and succeeding sessions. Supported by a mass of such petitions, Mr. Lambton moved, on the 17th of April, for a committee of the whole House, to consider the state of the representation of the people in parliament. During the debate, which occupied two evenings, the opposite benches were nearly empty; and there was so thin an attendance during both evenings as to show that the House itself was little aware of the growing importance of the question before it. The division was taken during the absence of the leading members on both sides, and even of Mr. Lambton himself, the numbers being 55 to 43; that is, there was a majority of 12 against Mr. Lambton's motion. Perhaps the leading members on both sides might have been surprised if they could have been told how, on that day eleven years, the country would be awaiting the issue of the struggle, in the certainty of success; and how, on that day twelve years, the reformed parliament would be in full career, at leisure for further improvements, from the great question of the century being disposed of.

On the 9th of May, Lord John Russell took up the subject, without securing much more attention to what he had to say than Mr. Lambton had enjoyed. Few 'leading members' took the trouble, or had the courage to attend while he recommended his resolutions. These resolutions went merely to declare that the people were dissatisfied with their representation; that means should be taken to effect a representation of wealthy and populous places which had as yet no voice in the legislature; and that boroughs convicted of bribery and corruption should be disfranchised. There was little debate; the first resolution was condemned by a majority of 31 in a House of 279; and the others were negatived without a division.

Unpromising as all this looked, a real beginning was made, and immediately, to amend the representation. Grampound was disfranchised, to the dismay and grief of the lord chancellor, who saw no bounds to the mischief

of depriving some possibly innocent electors there of their votes, on account of the corruption of the rest, while he could perceive no reason for giving the franchise to Leeds, Birmingham, Manchester, and other populous places. As the bill passed the Commons, the Grampound franchise was to be transferred to Leeds; but the Lords decided for two additional members for the county of York, instead of giving a representation to Leeds. There was some difficulty as to whether the Commons should put up with such a contravention of their will by the Lords; but Lord John Russell thought it important to take all that could be got on this question; and, though the bill had ceased to be his charge after sustaining some essential alterations before it went up to the Lords, he secured its final acceptance by the Commons, and it passed on the 30th of May. It was on occasion of this bill that Mr. Ward said that he did not conceive that by voting for the disfranchisement of Grampound, 'he was giving any pledge to what was called parliamentary reform.' So he thought, and so thought many who were, like him, unaware that they were now securely involved in a movement against which they had formerly protested. It is instructive to read the records—in this case very brief—of the gradual enlargement of views which time and thought bring to such men. It is an instructive comment on the past, and a valuable prophecy as to the future. In October, 1819, Mr. Ward writes to the Bishop of Llandaff: 'All I am afraid of is, that by having the theoretical defects of the present House of Commons perpetually dinned into their ears, the well-intentioned and well-affected part of the community should at last begin to suppose that *some* reform is necessary. Now, I can hardly conceive *any* reform that would not bring us within the draught of the whirlpool of democracy, towards which we should be attracted by an irresistible force, and in an hourly accelerating ratio. But I flatter myself there is wisdom enough in the country to preserve us long from such an innovation.' In April, 1820, he writes: 'But I confess that when I see the progress that reform seems to be making, not only among the vulgar, but among persons like yourself, of understanding and education, clear of interested motives and party fanaticism,

my spirits fail me upon the subject. . . . I should look forward with much more comfort to what may remain to me of life, if I could persuade myself that the first day of reform was not at hand, and that the first day of reform would not be the first day of the English revolution.' In February, 1821, he tells his correspondent that Sir J. Mackintosh 'would keep the nomination boroughs;' adding: 'For my part, I am well enough content with the constitution as it is. This much, however, I must confess, that if public opinion—the opinion of men of sense and reflection like yourself, unconnected with party—once turns against it, there ought to be a change. We anti-reformers stand upon *practical benefit*—now there is no talking about the *practical benefit* of a discredited constitution.' In June, 1822, though still declaring himself 'afraid of parliamentary reform,' he speaks with satisfaction of the control exercised by public opinion over the votes of the Commons, and bears this remarkable testimony to the improvement of the national mind under the agitation of the question. Writing of Byron's prediction of a revolution, he says: 'For my part, I cannot help flattering myself, in spite of a great deal of distress, and some discontent, that this event is highly improbable. It appears to me that the people of England are advancing in knowledge and good sense. Party-spirit seems to be less blind and furious than it used to be. There is less factious opposition—I am not speaking of the House, but of the country—to the ministry, and less factious support of it. People do not abandon themselves so entirely to certain leaders, but exercise a more discriminating judgment upon each question as it arises.' In a few years, he became a member of the Canning ministry. Here we have in brief the history of a large class of the minds of the time, which were opening sideways, as one may say, while those of the lowest order of reformers were opening upwards.

The other great feature of the session was the removal of the conflict on the Catholic claims to the floor of the House of Lords. It was evident to all far-seeing men that the time was approaching when it would no longer do for politicians to go on repeating from year to year their own

had troubled it so long and so severely. Now that it was over, and that that restless spirit could trouble his race no more, the natural feelings of compassion and regret arose strongly and universally. His fellow-men began at once to look back upon him as a man, and not only as a conqueror and disturber who had humbled the pride of nations, and broken up the peace of continents. He was at once regarded as a suffering man—all pitying him for the dreadful fate of his closing years, spent in chafing against his bonds, and sinking under the burden of ignominious idleness; while the most thoughtful had a still deeper compassion for him, as one who had failed in the true objects of human life by the pursuit of personal aims. Looking back, they saw how one endowed with noble powers could have known but little of the peace of the soul; and how, in the crowning moments of his triumphs, his life had been a failure. Looking forward, they saw how, throughout the whole future of human experience, he would stand dishonourably distinguished from the humblest servant of the race who had ministered to its real good. Many, throughout all time, who have apparently been baffled in their aims, and laboured in vain to work out their schemes, have, visibly or invisibly, attained the truest and highest success by an unwavering fidelity to the right and the true, and have enjoyed their natural recompense in the exaltation of their own being. This one man, before whose powers the nations quailed, and whose will seemed to be, for the time, the law of his kind, was, in his very triumphs, a sufferer—a wanderer from the home of human affections—a powerless and defeated soldier in the conflict of human life. And he could not retrieve himself in adversity. Leisure and solitude brought no healing to him. He had no moral force which could respond to the appeal of adverse circumstance. He had in him nothing of the man which could, in a season of rest, look back with wonder or a smile on the turbulence of its childish vanity and pride; nothing of the sage which could draw from the vicissitudes of experience any aliment of present wisdom and peace. He remained to the last morally a child and a sufferer—a baffled child, and an unconscious sufferer from worse woes than his mortifica-

tions, his bondage, and his privations. It might be a question whether all was done for him, or done in the best way, which his vast powers, and his misfortunes, and his appeal as an enemy, might claim; but if all had been done which the highest wisdom and magnanimity could suggest, it could have really availed him nothing. His misery lay too deep for healing by human hands: it was wrought into his very being; and it could be dissolved by no touch short of that which took out the life from the clay, and gave back the dust to dust. That time had now come. The dulled eye no longer wandered over the boundless ocean which surrounded his island-prison; his aching mind no longer gazed abroad listlessly over the heaving sea of human affairs; his spent heart had ceased its beating; and his dust lay under the willows in that nook at St. Helena, where strangers came from the east and the west, to feel and wonder at the silence which had settled down on one who had made the world echo with the wail of the widow and the orphan, the groans of dying multitudes, the tramp of hosts, and the crash of falling empires. In this nook of the world there had been no peace to his soul; and it was, perhaps, all the more soothing to find quietness about his grave.

He died on the 5th of May 1821, after a painful and lingering decline. The news of his death reached England while London was preparing for the coronation of the sovereign who had had him in charge, and who was to follow him, after the lapse of a few years, to that bed of rest where foes lie down side by side—comrades at last.

moment. When his preparations were made and the hour of sailing drew nigh, he went to Liverpool, to take his farewell of his constituents; and there we see him, 'at Seaforth House, the residence of his friend Mr. Gladstone (the father of the Right Hon. W. Gladstone), situated on a flat, stretching north of the town, and overlooking the sea. The room which he occupied looked out upon the ocean, and here he would sit for hours, gazing on the open expanse, while young Gladstone, who has subsequently obtained such distinction in the councils of his sovereign, used to be playing on the strand below.' On this occasion, as he sat 'for hours,' he was revolving in his mind news which had reached him on his journey down, and which would penetrate, and fill with his name, every corner of Europe, as fast as the winds could carry the tidings.

Of all the interests presenting themselves at this important season, none was more engrossing at the time than the state of Ireland. Alas! when was it otherwise? and when will it be otherwise? There is some satisfaction, however, in contemplating this period, because in this direction, as in others, some promise of a better government, and more social welfare, was dawning.' It must always be long, and seem yet longer, before the good results of an improved policy can appear in a reliable form in a society so disorganised as that of Ireland; but the institution of the improvement is meanwhile a cheering spectacle in itself. Lord Talbot was a viceroy whose mind was full of ideas of Protestant ascendancy; and it was little that his humane and sensible secretary, Charles Grant, could do to ameliorate his rule; and at that time, the bigot Saurin, the unrelenting foe of the Catholics, was attorney-general for Ireland. Now the viceroy and the attorney-general Mr. Plunket, were in favour of the Catholic claims; and though the usual method was still pursued of appointing men of mutually counteracting tendencies, Mr. Goulburn being sent as secretary with the Marquis of Wellesley, the gain to the liberal cause was, on the whole, very great.

The effect of the king's visit was over almost as soon as he was out of sight; and then the heart-burnings among fellow-citizens in the towns, and outrages in the country,

went on as virulently as before. The conciliation dinner which was to celebrate the king's visit, was given up, and the committee publicly resigned their trust, on the ground of the dissensions of the parties who were to conciliate. The Catholics offered addresses of affectionate congratulation to the incoming viceroy; while the corporation of Dublin offered an address of affectionate condolence to the outgoing attorney-general. An attempt to introduce Catholics into corporations was defeated at a guild of Dublin merchants; and the majority made ostentatious rejoicings under the eyes of their new ruler. In the country, no man's house was secure; and those of the gentry were so many garrisons. Bands of Whiteboys—hundreds in a band—besieged these garrisons, fought, plundered, murdered, in defiance of police and soldiery. The soldiers, indeed, found themselves powerless against a foe so light-footed, so familiar with the country, and so utterly reckless and desperate as the peasantry of the south of Ireland. In the north, as usual, all was comparatively quiet; but at length symptoms of disorder appeared there also. It became necessary to empower the viceroy to proclaim any part of the country which might be disturbed; and in February two bills were passed, one to reimpose the Insurrection Act, and the other to suspend the Habeas Corpus till the ensuing 1st of August. In the course of the month of April, after a dreadful season of disorder and its punishments, comparative quiet seemed to settle down on that unhappy country; but to rebellion and its retribution now succeeded famine. As in later times, excessive rains rotted the potatoes in the ground; and, as in later times, the people were taken unprepared. They ate their potatoes till no more were to be had; and then they took to oatmeal, till they had no means of purchase left; and then they crowded the roads and towns to beg, or stole away into hiding-places, to die of hunger. As in later times, no seed-potatoes were left, to give some hope of a harvest the next year; and again, as so often before, did typhus fever follow upon the famine, quelling rebellion itself in destitution and woe. The next year's crop of potatoes, however, was good; there was a decline of insurrectionary movement; and the influence of the liberal

viceroy did perhaps all that it could under the circumstances. But the opinions and temper of the viceroy can effect but little in such a case, while the laws and the conduct of surrounding officials proceed on principles that he does not hold. That the Marquis of Wellesley was favourable to the claims of the Catholics was gratifying to them; but it did not enable him to do them or their country much good while the laws, and almost every one concerned in the administration of them, were anti-Catholic. The true field of Irish amelioration was the floor of parliament, where oppressive and insulting laws could be remodelled or repealed. To this end, Mr. Canning directed what he believed would be his last efforts for his country, before going to the distant dependency where he was henceforth to live and work. On the 30th of April of, as he supposed, his last session in parliament, he moved for leave to bring in a bill to annul the disabilities of Catholic peers to sit in the House of Lords. He professed to have hope that a measure so limited as this might be obtained; and he saw how its adoption must open a way to further concessions. The bill was carried successfully on its way, as far as to the second reading in the House of Lords, when it was thrown out by a majority of 42.

Till the enlarged liberality of the laws should enable him to do more, Lord Wellesley did, from his own resources of wisdom and humanity, what he could. He greatly improved the police of Ireland; he completed the revision and amendment of the list of magistrates; he suppressed the offensive demonstrations of the Orange party, forbidding the procession of the 5th of November, and the decking out of the statue on College Green; and he received with magnanimous good-humour the evidences of unpopularity which he thus brought upon himself. The Dublin corporation censured him, under cover of a censure of the lord mayor, who had co-operated zealously with him. The 'Protestant' newspapers abused him. The 'Protestant' public mobbed him at the theatre; some fraction of that loyal public throwing a bottle at him on one such occasion. The turbulent people under him might behave as they would; it did not deter him from attempting to do them good. The secret of success in that

endeavour has not yet been found; but there can be no doubt that the administration of Lord Wellesley was a benefit to Ireland in many ways. Never before, perhaps, were the affairs of Ireland so copiously discussed in the legislature as in this season, when her saddest disorder and misery called forth only the more of the paternal element in the mind and heart of her excellent ruler. Sir John Malcolm wrote of him, a year later than this time, that he 'was glad to find the extreme Catholics as much out of humour with the lord-lieutenant as the extreme Orangemen; and that 'that strange scene, Ireland, appeared to be just at that crisis when all his highest qualities, if allowed their scope,' must do 'essential good.' If we see as yet, but too little of this 'essential good,' we must remember that Ireland has improved since the times prior to Lord Wellesley's rule; improved in resources, and even—bad as matters yet are—in principle and temper; and there is no saying how much worse she might have been now but for him—how her Orangemen might have raved, and her factions have fought and jobbed, as before his day. But there is so little to be said yet of hope and gratulation about Ireland, that it is a welcome change to turn to any other scene—even of strife.

A strife took place in the Church at this time which requires notice from its connection with both past and future states of religion in England. Throughout its whole existence, the Church of England has included three parties of religionists; men who naturally class themselves under one of three methods of regarding and receiving the religion which is equally precious to them all. These sections are the High Church, the Calvinistic, and the Moderate; or, as we call them at the present day, the Catholic, the Evangelical, and the Liberal. By the constitution and principle of the Roman Catholic Church, men of all tendencies of mind are retained in harmony within its pale. Under the authority of that church, every diversity of mind, manners, and morals may repose, without further strife than must arise wherever the inquisitive and active mind of man has scope and interest. But a similar repose and harmony are not possible in a Protestant Church, whose appeal is to the Scriptures

should be disappointed of their expectations; but the blame of this disappointment lay with a preceding generation of statesmen; who had been too blind to see the mischief they were doing in tampering with the freedom of marriage; and not with those who were now endeavouring to restore the sanctity and stability of an institution in which the morality of society was still involved. Imprudence and carelessness in contracting marriage are a great evil; but it is less than that of playing fast and loose with an institution whose very virtue resides in its certainty and irreversibleness. Whether a time may come when society may perceive that its moral purity can be better promoted than by connecting the conjugal relation with law and arrangements of property, is a question fairly open to the speculative moralist—a proper subject of individual opinion; but it was not the question now. There was no question of the institution itself, but of legal arrangements under it; and the Lords and ‘the country’ were united in considering the inviolability of marriage the first consideration in morality, and the fate of certain windfalls of property a very inferior one. So the country did not throw off its ‘good opinion’ of the Upper House ‘within ten days,’ as the lord chancellor prophesied, but certainly thought no worse of the Lords for the large majority with which they passed the new Marriage Act of 1822.

When the session closed, on the 6th of August, the king and the legislature dispersed, to take their rest and pleasure in various ways. On the 10th, the king set off down the Thames, in great pomp, on his way to Scotland. Lord Londonderry hastened to his seat at Foot’s Cray, to prepare for his mission to the Congress of Verona in October, where he was to represent England. His passage thither was sure to be attended by the curses of all the lovers of freedom along the road, and by the groans of all the secret societies over which he was to ride rough-shod, to be welcomed at the end of his journey by the sympathies of all the despots in Europe. He probably knew this. He knew that the continent was honeycombed with these secret societies; and confident as he was of his motives—imperturbable as he was in his opinions—the consciousness of the hatred that would dog his steps may have

tended to disturb his nerves, and to perplex his brain. He had been overwearied with the fatigues of the session; and he had astonished and grieved his friends of late by extraordinary tales of conspiracies against his private character—of waylayings in the parks, and threats in the street against his purse, his reputation, and his life. He repaired to his country-seat, to refresh himself by rest and change of ideas, while some of his colleagues went to Scotland in attendance upon the king. Mr. Canning meantime was gone to Liverpool, to bid farewell to his constituents before embarking for India. There, while he looked abroad upon the sea from his window at Seaforth House, he had awful news to ponder—news which met the king on his landing at Leith—news which struck the despots of Europe aghast upon their thrones—news which was hailed with clasped hands and glistening eyes by aliens in many a provincial town in England, and with imprudent shouts by conclaves of patriots abroad.

‘I have this moment heard from Liverpool,’ writes the king to his chancellor, ‘of the melancholy death of his and my dear friend, poor Londonderry.’ ‘Poor Londonderry’ had destroyed himself. ‘In common with everybody,’ writes the chancellor, ‘I am oppressed and much affected by the loss of the Marquis of Londonderry.’ Everybody was ‘much affected;’ but everybody was not ‘oppressed.’ The relief to a multitude was so extraordinary and portentous, that little children who carried the news, as children love to carry wonderful news, without knowing what it means, were astonished at the effect of their tidings, and saw, by the clasped hands and glistening eyes of aliens in English towns, that there was a meaning in the tidings beyond their comprehension. There are some now, who in mature years, cannot remember without emotion what they saw and heard that day. They could not know how the calamity of one man—a man amiable, winning, and generous, in the walk of his daily life—could penetrate the recesses of a world, not as a calamity, but as a ray of hope in the midst of thickest darkness. This man was the screw by which England had riveted the chains of nations. The screw was drawn, and the immovable despotism might now be overthrown. It was not only the

sufferers who thought so. 'My great object,' continues the king to his chancellor—'my great object, my good friend, in writing to you to-night, is to tell you that I have written to Liverpool, and I do implore of you not to *lend yourself* to any arrangement *whatever*, until my return to town. This, indeed, is Lord Liverpool's own proposal; and, as you may suppose, I have joined *most cordially* in the proposition. It will require the most *prudent foresight* on *my* part relative to the new arrangements that must now necessarily take place. You may easily judge of the state of my mind.'

Others could judge of the state of the king's mind, nearly as well as the chancellor. He was afraid of having to accept Canning as a minister. While the crowd at Westminster Abbey greeted the removal of Lord Londonderry's coffin from the hearse with 'a shout which echoed loudly through every corner of the Abbey,' Mr. Canning was received with acclamations in the streets of Liverpool, and at a festival 'to which five hundred gentlemen sat down.' They had a persuasion that they should not lose him now. They could not be sure of this; for, as he told them, he did not himself know what to expect. 'I know as little,' he said, 'as any man that now listens to me, of any arrangements likely to grow out of the present state of things.' But every one was aware, and no one more than the king, that Mr. Canning was the only man equal to the post which was vacant, and that he must now fill it. It was a sore necessity; but circumstances were too strong for the royal and ministerial will. Yet 'it was not till the 8th of September that Lord Liverpool requested to see Mr. Canning. An interview took place on the 11th, when the foreign office was offered to him by the premier, and accepted after a struggle.' There was much of struggle in the business: struggle in the mind of the king and future colleagues who feared and disliked him; and no little struggle to him who well knew that he was entering on a career where he would ever find opposition in his front, and hatred by his side. What the struggle was to cost him was shown on a day too near for the interests of the world. But he was full of chivalrous courage; and he entered manfully on his task of liberating nations.

On the 17th of September, the Duke of Wellington set out for Verona, to attend the congress where Lord Londonderry had been expected; and Lord Amherst went to India in the place of Mr. Canning. Thus, while man had proposed, did God dispose; and the destinies of the world were thereby changed, beyond human calculation.

CHAPTER V.

Policy of Castlereagh—The Princes and Peoples of Europe—Revolutions Abroad—Policy of Canning—Congress of Verona—French Invasion of Spain—Overthrow of Spanish Revolution—South American Provinces—Appeal from Portugal—New Era of Conflict—Deaths of Potentates—Affairs of Greece—Algiers—Ashantee War—Burmese War—Oregon—Aliens.

THERE was abundant reason for the rejoicing which spread through the world on the death of Lord Londonderry; and the shout which rang through the Abbey when his coffin was taken from the hearse was natural enough, though neither decent nor humane. When a man's acts have proved him an enemy to his race, his race will not desire that he should live to continue those acts; and the case is not altered by any evidence that that man's eulogists can bring that he meant no harm; that he meant some kind of good; and that he was admired and beloved in private for certain qualities of his character. All these things may be true; as indeed they are likely to be; for the cases are rare in which men do deliberately mean harm, and propose to themselves to do things for the purpose of injuring others. The tyrant no more says to himself: 'Now I will oppress my people, and make them miserable,' than the liar proposes to himself: 'Now I will tell a lie;' or the sot: 'Now I will get drunk.' In all these cases the sin is done through a wrong habit of mind. It comes out of narrow views and selfish propensities; and not out of an express intention to do harm. The despots of Europe were not the less tyrants because they sincerely

were putting off the irksome task of preparing the constitutions they had promised to their peoples. The King of Sweden was ordering the storthing of Norway not to think of abolishing their order of hereditary nobility. The Emperor of Russia was gratifying his benevolent feelings, by ordaining comparative personal freedom for his serfs, while stringently training his slave-army, and making military decoration the reward of all kinds of merit. The restored Bourbons of France were studying how best to impose dumbness on their noisy nation. The King of Sardinia was swimming paper-ducks in a wash-basin, to while away his days. The Emperor of Austria was, with Prince Metternich's help, devising sufferings and insults for the bodies and souls of the Confaloniere and Pellicos, who, troublesome children as they were to such a father, would not accept his fatherly rule in peace, or agree that to spare the rod was to spoil the child. While the members of the Holy Alliance were thus employed, there was business of a different kind going on among the multitude below them.

In Denmark, the young theologian, Dampe, suspended from his public preaching, was giving private lectures on religion and politics; and in his study, preparing plans for revolutionising the kingdom, till he was shut up for life in solitude and silence. In Paris, towards midnight of a certain Sunday, Louvel was waiting outside the opera-house, his hand upon the dagger with which he hoped to cut off the successor to the throne of France by the murder of the Duc de Berri. In Germany, certain watchful eyes were counting the letters which Kotzebue sent through the Post-office, to inform the Russian autocrat of 'the state of literature and public opinion in the cities;' that is, of the open songs and secret societies by which the university students were endeavouring to rouse and organise the citizens for a purpose of constitutional demands; and the young fanatic, Sand, was secretly nourishing his resolution to free the land from the spy. When the act was done, and Sand was sent after his victim, 'thousands of spectators hastened, if possible, to get some drops of his blood, or some of his hair. The chair on which he sat when he underwent his punishment was

purchased of the executioner by a society for six louis-d'ors. No disorder, however, took place.' The time was not come for what newspapers call 'disorder,' though there was much of what the sovereigns considered so. The professors had 'not yet completely learned to confine themselves to their proper province;' they forgot the morals of the students in teaching them the principles of politics. Even at Vienna, and in the metropolitan seat of learning, such 'a spirit appeared that the emperor was compelled to have recourse to 'severe measures,' to control the teachings of the masters of learning. Along the Elbe, the Maine, and the Rhine, a silent symbol was put forth which troubled the repose of rulers on their thrones. For hundreds of miles, men appeared in the old German costume, which suggested to everybody thoughts of an 'ancient ideal system of Teutonic freedom.' In the streets of Jena and Heidelberg, and under the walls of the ducal palace at Darmstadt a song was heard—the celebrated 'Great Song,' 'Princes arise, ye people rise'—which was all discord to the ears of princes, all music to the hearts of the people, and whose authorship could never, by threat or stratagem, be discovered. While the emperor, at St. Petersburg, was dispensing his benevolences, his brother Constantine was torturing Polish officers at Warsaw, and teaching the most rapid lessons of rebellion to the crowds gathered about the great parade of the city. When any officer was declared to have failed to bring up his horse to a hair's-breadth in the line, he was compelled to leap his horse over a pyramid of bayonets so high that it was barely possible to escape impalement of one or both; if both escaped, the feat was to be done again, and then a third time: and after the popular cry of 'Shame!' and military intercession had compelled the prince to release his victim, it was no surprise to any one that that victim disappeared in the night, and for ever. This prince was, it is true, a sort of Caliban, and no more like the ordinary run of princes than that of men in general; but the world saw him in command of an army, and beheld in these scenes a spectacle of royal sport and popular suffering; and it went with other things to deepen the abyss between sovereigns and subjects.

In Spain, there was no longer any pause or any disguise. In the south, Colonel Riego rose in the beginning of 1820, and proclaimed the constitution of 1812. He was soon disabled by accidents of the season and of fortune; and every endeavour was made to conceal from the rest of the kingdom what had happened near Cadiz. It is doubtless more conceivable that such an attempt should be made in Spain, than that an English cabinet should hope to prevent the people of Scotland knowing of a rising in Dorsetshire; but it was yet too absurd to succeed. All Spain presently knew of Riego's enterprise; and the greater part of the nation immediately rose. In a few days, the rising was in a state to be reported to all Europe as the revolution in Spain. At the end of February, the king saw his generals and his best troops joining the liberal cause. On the 10th of March, he published his intention of convening the cortes, and instituting various reforms. But it was too late. The people of Madrid assembled round his palace, with shouts for the constitution; and on the evening of that same 10th of March, the feeble Ferdinand promised and proclaimed the constitution of 1812.

This Spanish revolution was the signal for many risings. In August, Portugal followed; and before the year was out, Naples had demanded and obtained the proclamation of the Spanish constitution. Then Piedmont prepared for a similar struggle, and believed liberty to be secure when Charles Albert, the present King of Sardinia, and then Prince of Carignano, swore that he would lay down his life for the cause. He laid down other lives, however, instead of his own; drawing back at the critical moment, and in fact, if not in purpose, betraying his confederates and their cause. And now occurred the circumstances which in reality assembled the congress at Verona, though the pretext was a consultation on the affairs of Greece. While Spain and Portugal were shouting at the fall of the Inquisition and many another ancient wrong, and Germany was chanting the echoes of freedom, and Piedmont and Lombardy were rapidly arming, and Naples was triumphing, and Sicily was trembling, as if the very Titan beneath her mountain were about to arise, what was doing in France? The King of France was engrossed with the fear that his

ness of tone assumed by government in the recent negotiations; and the amendment proposed was, a declaration of gratitude and approbation in regard to what had been done. At the close, the opposition members were about to leave the House in a body; but some ministerial members called for a division. It was only for want of room in the lobby that any one appeared to vote against the government. The whole assembly poured into the lobby, till it could hold no more; and then the twenty members who were shut in were compelled to pass for an opposition, though there were ministerialists among them. They amounted to 20, in a house of 372.

One passage of Mr. Canning's speech spread over the world, and was vehemently hailed or resented wherever it reached:

'I contend, sir, that whatever might grow out of a separate conflict between Spain and France—though matter for grave consideration—was less to be dreaded than that all the great powers of the continent should have been arrayed together against Spain; and that although the first object, in point of importance, indeed, was to keep the peace altogether—to prevent any war against Spain—the first in point of time was to prevent a general war; to change the question from a question between the allies on one side, and Spain on the other, to a question between nation and nation. This, whatever the result might be, would reduce the quarrel to the size of ordinary events, and bring it within the scope of ordinary diplomacy. The immediate object of England, therefore, was to hinder the impress of a joint character, from being affixed to the war—if war there must be—with Spain; to take care that the war should not grow out of an assumed jurisdiction of the congress; to keep within reasonable bounds that predominating *arcopagitical** spirit, which the memorandum of the British cabinet, of May, 1820, describes as "beyond the sphere of the original

* The council of Arcopagus at Athens was remarkable for its penetrating and superintending character; pronouncing on the economy of private houses, and judging children for tormenting birds. It was a more meddling council than it became any congress to resemble, in a later age of the world.

conception, and understood principles of the alliance'—“an alliance never intended as a union for the government of the world, or for the superintendence of the internal affairs of other states.” And this I say was accomplished.' ‘Canning,’ says his biographer, ‘always protested against the system of holding congresses for the government of the world.’

As this noted speech declared, the object of ‘Great Britain was accomplished in the potentates at Verona being deterred from declaring a war against Spain. The matter lay now between the two countries which were separated by the Pyrenees; and peace was preserved elsewhere. What his idea was of the peace to be preserved by Great Britain, he manifested in a speech delivered at Plymouth in the autumn of the same year, when the French and Spaniards were at war—1823. ‘Our ultimate object was,’ he said, ‘the peace of the world; but let it not be said that we cultivate peace either because we fear, or because we are unprepared for war; on the contrary, if, eight months ago, the government did not hesitate to proclaim that the country was prepared for war, if war should unfortunately be necessary, every month of peace that has since passed has but made us so much the more capable of exertion. The resources created by peace are means of war. In cherishing those resources, we but accumulate those means. Our present repose is no more a proof of inability to act, than the state of inertness and inactivity in which I have seen those mighty masses that float in the waters above your town is a proof they are devoid of strength, and incapable of being fitted for action. You well know, gentlemen, how soon one of those stupendous masses, now reposing on their shadows in perfect stillness—how soon, upon any call of patriotism or of necessity, it would assume the likeness of an animated thing—instinct with life and motion—how soon it would ruffle, as it were, its swelling plumage—how quickly it would put forth all its beauty and its bravery, collect its scattered elements of strength, and awaken its dormant thunder. Such as is one of these magnificent machines when springing from inaction into a display of its might—such is England herself; while apparently passive and

one or the other scale. To look to the policy of Europe, in the times of William and Anne, for the purpose of regulating the balance of power in Europe at the present day, is to disregard the progress of events, and to confuse dates and facts which throw a reciprocal light upon each other. It would be disingenuous, indeed, not to admit that the entry of the French army into Spain was, in a certain sense, a disparagement—an affront to the pride—a blow to the feelings of England; and it can hardly be supposed that the government did not sympathise, on that occasion, with the feelings of the people. But I deny that, questionable or censurable as the act might be, it was one which necessarily called for our direct and hostile opposition. Was nothing then to be done? Was there no other mode of resistance than by a direct attack upon France; or by a war to be undertaken on the soil of Spain? What if the possession of Spain might be rendered harmless in rival hands—harmless as regarded us—and valueless to the possessors? Might not compensation for disparagement be obtained, and the policy of our ancestors vindicated, by means better adapted to the present time? If France occupied Spain, was it necessary, in order to avoid the consequences of that occupation, that we should blockade Cadiz? No. I looked another way. I sought materials of compensation in another hemisphere. Contemplating Spain, such as our ancestors had known her, I resolved that if France had Spain, it should not be Spain “with the Indies.” I called the New World into existence, to redress the balance of the Old.’

In this celebrated speech, Mr. Canning appears to take his stand where he avowed his wish that his country should stand—‘not only between contending nations, but between conflicting principles.’ If we find in it a spirit higher than that of the allied potentates who would have ruled both hemispheres after the pattern of their antiquated ideas, we find in it also a tone lower than that of sympathy with the struggles for freedom which yet it was his policy to aid. When, as a listener tells us, ‘his chest heaved and expanded, his nostril dilated, a noble pride slightly curled his lip, and age and sickness were forgotten in the ardour of youthful genius,’ it must have been the consciousness of

power and of the soundness of his policy which inspired him; for he was certainly not, by his own profession, under the sway of emotions so lofty as the occasion created in others. It may be, however, that his sentiments were loftier than his professions. 'All the while,' says the observer, 'a serenity sat upon his brow that pointed to deeds of glory.' The deeds *were* glorious, however the doer may have assigned reasons of mere policy for them in an assembly which he could so sway as that they would have borne from him expressions of a higher political generosity. Perhaps he remembered how many were watching afar to catch up his words—the Holy Allies for their purposes, and many an eager malcontent for his; and this may have made him careful, in the midst of his emotions, to preserve his central stand between the imperial policies and the popular enthusiasms of the time. If so, he spoke wisely and well for such listeners, not only in his expositions of his principles and methods of peace, of non-interference, and of recognition of *de facto* powers, whatever their origin and date, but he offered them, in the course of the same chapter of events, a warning and a prophecy which has never been forgotten since, and is little likely to be forgotten now.

The occasion was the arrival of intelligence that Spain was interfering with Portugal, whose free constitution was hated and feared by the restored despot Ferdinand. Mr. Canning had formerly declared what our relations with Portugal were. If she chose to undertake any war on her own account, for the defence of freedom or any other cause, Great Britain had nothing to do with that; but, if she were attacked on account of her constitutional freedom, or for any other cause, Great Britain was bound by treaties, and by every obligation of good faith, to repair to her assistance. Such a case had arisen now—in December 1826. Some Portuguese regiments had deserted to the royalist cause in Spain. The Spanish government had repeatedly pledged itself to disarm and disperse these regiments; but it failed to do so, and permitted these regiments to make hostile inroads into Portugal, under the eyes of the Spanish authorities, and with every tacit assistance from them. On the night of Friday, the 8th of December, the

him, even while there was fear that his savage brother Constantine would succeed him. The savage was, however, induced to set himself aside—a wonderfully enlightened act, such as some who are not Calibans are incapable of. The younger brother Nicholas succeeded, and walked up the steps of the throne amidst a thousand daggers pointed at his breast. How he charmed them down, and how he made terms with those who held them, no one knows.

Thus would the Holy Alliance have been already decimated, if Canning had not before virtually dispersed the assembly. Soon after the arch-enemy, Napoleon, was in his grave, Londonderry followed, and carried with him the fate of the compact. Now five of the sovereigns had slipped away; and a plebeian man had arisen, who was too strong for all that were gone and all that remained. Here, then, we may drop all mention of the Holy Alliance.

It has been related that when the Verona Congress was summoned, the business proposed for its consideration was a consultation on the affairs of Greece. As it turned out, the subject of Greece was scarcely mentioned at that congress; which was occupied with the then secret topic of the French intentions towards Spain. The British minister's mind, however, was not the less open to Greek interests. In his youth he had written a poem on Greece—a lament on its slavery; and when the extensive Greek insurrection in 1821 seemed to open a prospect of liberty, no heart beat higher with hope and sympathy than his. He was, like a multitude of others, sanguine about the ability, physical and moral, of the Greeks to accomplish and maintain their independence. His duty as a minister, however, had to be considered before his predilections as a man. He adhered firmly to the principles on which he conducted his government in other cases. He preserved peace on the continent by strict neutrality in regard to the war in Eastern Europe; he enforced this neutrality by restraining individuals from rushing to Greece, to fight against Turkey: while he used all the power of his position to influence Turkey favourably, and to soften the horrors of the war. His countenance was on the side of liberty; and he was already pondering a scheme, which he carried out in a subsequent year, for the protection of Greece against the

destructive violence of her foe, while yet strictly enforcing his policy of non-interference with any affairs of other states in which Great Britain was not, as a state, involved. Turkey had the same claim to the possession of Greece that any other state has to its conquered dependencies; and however the sympathy of the enlightened world might be with the insurgent Greeks, no government had a right to interfere with the possessions of Turkey. Every assistance but political aid was, however, freely offered throughout Europe. Kings and people subscribed money for the redemption of Greek captives, and the support of Greek outcasts; and, in spite of all prohibitions of governments, many volunteers from France, England, Italy, and Germany, went to fight under the Greek leaders. Our own Byron perished in the cause—laid low by fatigue and fever before Missolonghi. The accomplished and beloved Santa Rosa, who had failed in the struggle to free his own Piedmont from Austrian rule, gave his efforts, and presently his life, to the Greek cause. At that time, the cause appeared desperate; and its misfortunes were cruelly aggravated by the disappointment of hopes held out from England of supplies of money and steam-boats. Perhaps the less said the better of the Greek loan negotiated in London in 1825, except that such incidents ought to yield their full lesson to future times, when similar occasions may occur. We are disposed to believe that the business was originally undertaken with a true heartiness in the Greek cause—with an enthusiasm which carried some parties beyond their calculations, and a due consideration of their means; and this kind of inconsiderateness is too likely to induce a reaction of selfish care, under which the pretension of benevolence and a love of liberty becomes a mockery. Thus it was in the matter of the Greek loan in London, which yielded even less of credit to the managing parties in England, than of money to the Greeks. Amidst the flow and ebb of sentiment and action among private parties in England, the government steadily held its position of neutrality, giving its endeavours in aid of humanity, and its undisguised good wishes to the Greek insurgents.

It has been told how complete was the humiliation of Algiers in 1816, and how a thousand and eighty Christian

Peace was concluded with the King of Ava, in February, on terms which were triumphant to the British. Their expenses were paid by the Burmese, and there was such a cession of border territory as would secure Bengal from incursions from the east. There was difficulty and delay about the restoration of the prisoners and the payment of the tribute; but every condition was enforced by Sir A. Campbell, and, on the 5th of March, the British troops turned their faces towards Rangoon, on their way back to Bengal.

While these eastern conflicts were taking place, Mr. Canning was earnestly occupied at home in preventing a war in the western world. Till our globe is better known, and newly discovered portions more accurately surveyed and defined than has been possible in the early days of geographical science, there will be danger of disputes about possession and boundaries between countries which have contributed to the discovery of new regions, and which may have been concerned in cessions of territory obscurely described. This has been the case with regard to the territory pertaining to one of the most important rivers in the New World—the Columbia; the possession of which has been repeatedly and vehemently disputed by the English government and that of the United States. When Mr. Canning came into office in 1822, the condition of the question was such that, as Lord Castlereagh told Mr. Rush, the American minister in London, war could be produced by holding up a finger.

The matter was really a very important one. The Columbia is the largest river which flows into the Pacific; its course from the Rocky Mountains being nearly nine hundred miles. Its entrance is somewhat difficult; but just within is a spacious and secure bay. The harbours along the west coast of North America are very few; not more than two or three outside the disputed territory; and far-seeing men are aware that every secure anchorage will be of inestimable value when the trade of the Pacific becomes what it is certainly destined to be. Again, the Columbia is now the only large river amidst the habitable regions of the globe which remains to be colonised; and of all possible considerations, none is so important to Great

Britain as her field of colonisation. Embayed in the coast of the disputed territory is an island—Vancouver's Island—two hundred and fifty miles long by fifty broad, which is fertile, has a climate like that of England, and abounds in coal of an excellent quality. In Mr. Canning's time the importance of this island was not so clear as it is now that we have obtained settlements in China, and extended our steam-navigation into the Pacific. The prospect was not then so distinct as now, of the activity of commerce which must arise in those regions, where our agents are already looking for coal and good harbours. At that time, the Oregon was a remote region beyond the Rocky Mountains, which it seemed scarcely possible for emigrants to reach, and whence there could hardly be any communication between them and the mother-country. Now that it is accessible from the other side, being only eighteen days' sail from our Chinese settlements, while commerce and navigation are quickening along the whole American coast, the aspect of the question is much altered. But even then the Oregon territory was seen to be no trifle, to be lightly given up by an insular nation, whose future welfare must depend incalculably on its means of colonisation; and the question of the right to Oregon was disputed with a proportionate warmth and pertinacity.

The claim of the United States was for a boundary which should give them not only the Columbia River but Vancouver's Island: bringing their coast so nearly to a junction with the Russian territory, as that British vessels could pass in and out only among islands belonging to the one or the other power. In 1818, the British commissioners, Mr. Robinson and Mr. Goulburn, would not concede this; and the American government would not modify the claim; and the parties, therefore, made an arrangement which could not but increase the difficulty of a future settlement. They agreed to leave the territory open to occupation by Americans and British for ten years; after which the subject should be resumed. As time drew on to the close of the term, Mr. Rush, the American minister, was directed to open the subject again with Mr. Canning; the United States government having, meantime, sent a frigate to the mouth of the Columbia, to

explore the river, and establish a post at its mouth, on what congress declared to be 'within the acknowledged limits' of the American territory. Mr. Rush waited on Mr. Canning, who was in bed with an attack of gout. Mr. Rush was admitted; they spread out maps upon the bed; and Mr. Canning was astonished to discover how great was the extent of the American claim. The next time they conferred, the American minister yielded two degrees of latitude, which would have left Vancouver's Island to Britain, but not the Columbia River. This offer was rejected by Mr. Canning, whose proposal of a modified settlement was in turn rejected by Mr. Rush. The more the affair was discussed, the more hopeless did any conclusion appear; and so angry did the people of both countries become, that the slightest irritability on the part of the negotiators would have instantly kindled a war. Mr. Canning's part was patience, and the recommendation of patience. He lost no opportunity of testifying his goodwill towards the government and people of the United States, and of restraining the jealousy between the two nations. The question was not settled in his time; but he did much in preventing a war, and in keeping open a way for an ultimate amicable settlement of a question whose importance to his country was greater than even he could be aware of.

Whenever the periods arrived—once in two years—for the renewal of the Alien Act, the question was asked in parliament by the opponents of the bill, whether it was proposed for the benefit of our own country or for that of foreign sovereigns. The subject is sufficiently connected with our foreign policy to find its place here; and especially because it was the prevalence of discontent and insurrection abroad, during this period, which made the seasons of the renewal of the Alien Act interesting and important occasions of discussion.

Every one who has travelled on the continent is ready to join in complaint and condemnation of the passport system there, by which every traveller is compelled to carry about with him a description of himself—his personal appearance, age, station, and occupation—and to have the statement certified afresh for every new country he enters.

The trouble and expense, the vexation and delay, the mistakes and inconveniences suffered by travellers under this system, are such as to make it hateful to everybody. No such system existing in England, it is clear that, during troubled times, every man who had reason to wish to escape notice, in any continental country, would rush to England, if he could, and there feel himself in safe hiding, if no method of registration of foreigners were adopted. Among these, the great majority might be such as, from their worth or their misfortunes, England would be proud and eager to receive and console; and such could have no reasonable objection to register their names and description on their arrival. Others, however, whether many or few, might be criminals or mischief-makers, of whose presence in the country it is absolutely necessary to the public security and good faith that the government should be aware. This much appears to have been undisputed, while the successive Alien Acts of 1820, 1822, and 1824, were under discussion in parliament. The provisions by which foreigners arriving in England were required to declare who and what they were, and to sign their names in the presence of an authority always on the spot, were not objected to by those who strenuously opposed other parts of the bills. By this registration it appears that, in 1820, the number of foreigners in England was no less than 25,000, very few of whom were engaged in commercial or other settled pursuits—a fact which seems to indicate the recent arrival of a large proportion of them. There was a constant increase of arrivals over departures, from an average of 266 to 1300 in a year, from 1819 to 1822, both inclusive. This extraordinary influx was, of course, owing to the revolutions and revolts on the continent; and the class of immigrants was exactly that which a Castlereagh and Sidmouth would watch with jealousy and dislike, and which would appeal strongly to the sympathies of the liberal leaders in parliament, and of the hospitable English people throughout the land. The objections made to the successive Alien Acts, and urged with force and ardour by some of the best men in parliament, regarded the power accorded to government of sending away obnoxious strangers, and its possible retro-

CHAPTER VI.

Changes in the Ministry—Mr. Canning and Mr. Huskisson—The Debt and Taxation—Commercial Policy—Spitalfields and Navigation Acts—Parliamentary Topics—Negro Slavery—Government Resolutions—Circular and its Reception—Smith the Missionary—Close of the Session.

IN looking back to the time of Mr. Canning's entrance upon office, in the autumn of 1822, it is clear—made clear by the light of subsequent events—that a new period in the domestic history of the country was opening. Many persons must have been aware of this at the time, if we may judge by the satisfaction expressed in various ways at the appointment of Mr. Robinson as chancellor of the exchequer, in the place of Mr. Vansittart, who left office with the title of Lord Bexley; and at Mr. Huskisson's becoming president of the Board of Trade, in January, 1823. Enough of the old elements was left to keep the timid and unobservant quiet, in the hope that things would go on pretty much as before, while Lord Liverpool was the head of the administration, and Lord Eldon was a fixture; and the Duke of Wellington represented England abroad, and the king was surrounded by so many of his favourite class of statesmen; and the Duke of York took a solemn oath occasionally against countenancing any attempt to relax the disabilities of the Catholics. It was a misfortune, to be sure, that the government of the country could not go on without Canning; without a man who was irretrievably pledged to the cause of Catholic emancipation; and that Mr. Huskisson was admitted into the cabinet, with his troublesome and dangerous notions about impairing the protection to native industry; but it was hoped that native industry was safe in the fostering bosom of the English nation; and some expressions of Mr. Canning's were laid hold of—expressions about the apparent impossibility of carrying Catholic emancipation under

any government that could be devised—as affording an assurance that, though the new minister was obliged to talk about the matter, he would never be able to do anything in it; and thus the tedium and loss of time in talking would be the extent of the evil. Besides, the two obnoxious men were ‘political adventurers,’ low-born, and therefore vulgar; and their influence would be kept down accordingly by their more aristocratic political connections. Such appears to have been the view of the ministerial party, at this time, throughout the country, from the king himself to the little country shopkeeper of Tory politics. The light of subsequent events shows us, however, that the case did not stand exactly thus. The king was growing morbid in temper and spirits—more addicted to a selfish and inglorious seclusion, and less interested about public affairs from year to year. The Duke of York was to die before him, and now in no long time. The lord chancellor was to find himself less influential, henceforth, in the cabinet and in the House of Lords. The Duke of Wellington was to prove himself as pliable before political necessity, as inflexible in military duty. Mr. Peel was to prove himself capable of education in the politics and philosophy of a new period. And Lord Liverpool himself was already so uneasy about the position of the Catholics that he did not, and could not, conceal from his intimate friends his conviction that their emancipation was only a question of time. He was now within five years of the date when, as is well known, he was making up his mind to resign his post to another who would carry the emancipation of the Catholics; which purpose was intercepted by the fatal seizure which withdrew him from public life.

As for the two ‘political adventurers’ whom it was so disagreeable to be obliged to admit into the cabinet, their present position was enough to mark, to the observant thinker, the change in the times. A new period must be opening when men of a new order are so indispensable at the council-board of the empire as that they are found seated there without effort of their own, and against the will of their colleagues. A new period was opening. Let us look at some of its features.

A time of war is a season of abeyance of social principles.

Amidst the disturbance of war, the great natural laws of society are obscured and temporarily lost. An exceptional state is introduced, during which the principles of social rule retire and hide themselves behind the passions and exigencies of the time. During such a season, the statesmen required are such as can employ, as substitutes for large principles of social rule, a strong and disinterested will, commanding a clear understanding and a ready apprehension. In such a season, the man is everything. He truly rules, if he has the requisite power of will, whether his aims and his methods be better or worse. Statesmanship is a post which in war, as in a despotism, may well make giddy all but the strongest heads—may relax any nerves but those turned to steel by the fire of an unquenchable will. A statesman in such times is required above all things to be consistent. Consistency—which then means an adherence to an avowed plan or system—is the one indispensable virtue of a statesman who rules during an obscuration of great social laws. There is no reason for vacillation or change when he acts from internal forces, and not under the direction of external laws conflicting with faculty put to a new school. While statesmanship was of this character—as long as the British nation lived under rule which had more or less of despotism in it, and while it was engaged in war—that is, during almost the whole of its existence—British statesmen were naturally, almost necessarily, of the aristocratic class. Leaving behind, out of notice, the administrators who were mere creatures of royal favour, and not worthy to be called statesmen, and coming down to later times, when political function had become a personal honour independently of royal grace, it was inevitable that English statesmen should be derived from a class to whom personal honours were most an object, and whose circumstances of birth and fortune set them at liberty for political action and occupation. Many influences favoured this choice of statesmen from the aristocratic orders: class habits of intercourse—class views and class interests. A lawyer's birth is forgotten in his eminence; so that low-born lawyers might rise, by the bar, to high political office; but otherwise a man must be, if not in some way noble,

highly aristocratic before he could be a statesman, under penalty of being called a 'political adventurer.' After the peace, a different set of conditions gradually developed themselves. When war is over—the critical period which admits the rule of the statesman's will—an organic state succeeds, wherein all individual will succumbs to the working of general laws. The statesman can then no longer be a political hero, overruling influences, and commanding events. He only can be a statesman in the new days who is the servant of principles—the agent of the great natural laws of society. The principles which had gone into hiding during the period of warfare now show themselves again, and assume, amidst more or less resistance, the government of states. Administrators who will not obey must retire, and make way for a new order of men. Amidst the difficulty and perplexity of such changes, a whole nation may be heard calling out for a great political hero, and complaining that all its statesmen have grown small and feeble; but it is not that the men have deteriorated, but that the polity is growing visibly organic; and a different order of men is required to administer its affairs.

When these new men come in, the old requisitions are still made—the old tests applied; and great is the consequent turmoil and disappointment on all hands. Everybody is troubled, except a philosopher here and there, who sees further than others. Consistency is talked of still, as the first virtue requisite in a statesman; and perhaps the man himself considers it so, and pledges himself fearlessly to consistency. But he soon finds himself no master of the principles of government, but a mere agent of laws which work themselves out whether he will or no; a mere learner under the tutelage of time and events. If he is a statesman from ambition, he must change the ground of his ambition; not exulting in framing and carrying out a political theory or system, but investing his pride in the enterprise of carrying out in the safest manner changes which must be made; doing in the best manner work which must, in one way or other, be done. As this new necessity opens before him—this fresh view of statesmanship presses upon him—he suffers more perhaps than all whom he dis-

would 'stand a very good chance of being disgraced.' And how was it, with regard to this matter of disgrace, to be brought upon the cabinet by this 'adventurer?' 'And it ought to be remembered to his honour,' the *Edinburgh Review* says of Mr. Huskisson, 'that the measures he has suggested, and the odium thence arising, have not been proposed and incurred by him in the view of serving any party purpose, but solely because he believed, and most justly, that these measures were sound in principle, and calculated to promote the real and lasting interests of the public.' A new period had indeed set in. The 'combination of great families' had been conscientious in their way; in discharging their responsibility to their 'party,' and toiling and endeavouring to achieve its 'purposes.' Now, here was a man out of their pale—and therefore an 'adventurer'—who ruled in his province for 'the real and lasting interests of the public.' When William Huskisson and his period came in, it was certainly time for Lord Chancellor Eldon to go out, for his period was indisputably expiring.

And now for the coming in of Huskisson's times.

During the war, when manufactures and commerce were in an artificial state, the British people had paid an amount of taxes, which now appears scarcely credible. What should we think of having to pay now, in taxes and loans, never less, and usually more, than a hundred millions a year. Yet this is what was paid from 1805 to 1818. In 1813, the amount paid in was £176,346,023. And in raising this amount of proceeds, great injury was done by the method of collection, which was expensive and burdensome to excess. Mr. Vansittart did not understand his business; and no one seems to have been able to teach it to him, or anxious to bid him learn it. He seems never to have perceived that to double a tax is not to double its proceeds. He did not consider that the lower ranks of society are the largest in number; and that numbers lessen with increase of rank, either of birth or money. He never could see that if a tax was doubled—a tax on any commodity or usage—a certain number of persons would give up the commodity or usage, from inability to pay the heavy tax; and that those who would cease to pay would be the poorer—that is, the larger class.

If Mr. Vansittart wanted more money, he doubled a tax, reckoned on double the former amount of proceeds, prepared and presented his estimates on this supposition—was, of course, disappointed, and had recourse to loans, or resorted to the sinking-fund; or in some way plunged deeper, till he could induce the House to increase some other tax. Such was the method of administration which gave advantage to seditious declaimers, and enabled Mr. Cobbett to carry with triumph, on the hustings at Norwich, resolutions in favour of applying the funds of the church and the crown-lands to the payment of the debt, abolishing all pensions, and suspending almost every kind of income, for purposes of relief from taxation. It was clear that the pressure of taxation was now too great to be borne; and that something must be done to arrest the demoralising discussion of the question, whether the debt could not somehow be got rid of.

Those days appear to us not very remote; yet it is difficult to believe how little remote they are when we call to mind the way in which the debt was talked over. A large number of gentlemen contrived to convince themselves and one another that the debt was a source of public wealth—a name or imagination which capitalists could trade in for mutual advantage, and for a share in which rich foreigners would pay hard cash into the country. Such men would not, of course, have the debt diminished. An opposite, and daily increasing party, which was not confined to those who found it hard to live, wanted to sweep it away altogether. It was not uncommon, in those days, to meet with persons who called themselves politicians, who would say openly: ‘Ah! you know, after all that can be said, we must come to the sponge.’ The Cobbetts, Hunts, and Wolseleys of those days—the shrewd, the ignorant, and the weak leaders of the people, not only spoke strongly—as they might reasonably do—of the hardship of the annual payment of the interest of the debt, but misled multitudes as to the origin and nature of the debt itself. They not only exposed the badness of the principle of mortgaging the industry of future generations; and showed the mischief of diverting annually from productive purposes so many

millions as go to pay the fundholder; and ridiculed the sinking-fund; all this was fair enough; but they went so far as to represent the debt as incurred by the aristocracy, for personal objects hostile to the national interest; and they clamoured for a confiscation of the property of the crown, and the church, and the aristocracy; and failing these, for an expunging of the debt, throwing the support of the fundholders wholly on the aristocracy. There were others who understood the origin and progress of the debt rightly enough; and who saw that, however indefensible was the great increase of it during the wars of the last century, the most vast and rapid increase of it took place during the present century, when this prodigious expenditure had become indispensable to our national existence. While mourning over the American war, and other unhappy conflicts, which raised the debt from 129 millions in 1775, to 360 at the Peace of Amiens in 1802, they remembered that the vital struggle which ensued, between 1803 and the overthrow of Napoleon in 1815, added 420 millions to the capital of the debt—an addition for which it seems impossible to blame, with any show of reason, any class or party at home. But those who understood accurately the origin of the debt fell into strange errors about the means of its liquidation. Some trusted to the sinking-fund, even up to this date and beyond it. They did not see the double mischief connected with the sinking-fund; that while there was in reality any surplus revenue applicable to its purposes the government would, almost of course, help itself to the money under any temporary embarrassment, to avoid proposing new taxes while the people found it more and more difficult to pay the old; and then that the commissioners of the sinking-fund would borrow to make up the deficiency. Absurd as it appears in the case of an individual, that a man should borrow in one direction to pay a debt in another—paying perhaps higher interest to his new creditor than to the old—and should then call for congratulations on the decrease of his first debt, this is exactly what was done by the government prior to this date. Mr. Pitt no doubt honestly believed that the money accruing to the sinking-fund would be allowed to accumulate untouched; but Mr.

Vansittart declared in 1813 that the sum produced by the sinking-fund 'would be an instrument of great force in the hands of parliament, which might lead to the most important results;' and Lord Londonderry, just before his death, avowed that 'he had never represented the sinking-fund as a saving to be held sacred, but as a mode of placing a large sum at the disposal of parliament, to be by them disposed as might be thought most equitable, whether for the relief of a pressing exigency of the present day, or for the security of posterity.' While this extraordinary laxity of profession was used by members of the government, there was no less laxity in the actual management of the so-called fund. The operations were curious enough in many ways; but the result was the most curious of all. While ministers were announcing that the sinking-fund had paid off nearly twenty-five millions of the debt since 1817, the public were wondering how it was that the interest of the debt was heavier by £700,000. By borrowing with all manner of ingenious and costly devices, on the one hand, to pay on the other, the managers had actually increased the debt by seven millions and a half since 1817, and had added £700,000 to the interest. Since the close of the war, the increase was upwards of eleven millions. Something must be done.

One process which had been begun in 1808 for the liquidation of the debt has acted well, as far as it has gone; and it is probable that whenever any effectual reduction of the debt takes place, it will be through a large extension of this method—that of converting permanent into terminable annuities—at some present sacrifice, of course, but with certain future relief. But this present sacrifice, this immediate increase of charge, was the objectionable feature at the date of which we write, when the public safety required a lightening of the burdens of the people. In Sir H. Parnell's *Financial Reform* there is an observation, that 'if all the loans which have been raised since the beginning of the war of 1739 had been borrowed in annuities for ninety-nine years, their extinction would already have commenced. We should now have been outgrowing the debt from year to year, and feeling its shackles falling off incessantly from our productive

husbandry. There was a reduction of the window-tax; fifty per cent. was taken off the taxes on servants, carriages and horses; and Ireland was relieved of the whole of the assessed taxes. In the preceding year, some considerable reductions had been forced upon ministers, who had taken off the greater part of certain very onerous taxes—as those on salt and leather, and the annual malt-tax. On that occasion, the late chancellor of the exchequer did not see how the labouring-man needed pity for paying from 20s. to 25s. a year for salt; since it was paid ‘in almost imperceptible portions’ from his weekly wages; but he was compelled to try what the labouring-man would think of the change. Now, a year later, a new minister voluntarily and exultingly came forward to repeal taxes; and the labouring-man, telling over his weekly wages in his cottage, began to feel that there was good, even to him, in peace above war.

The other way to improve the condition of the nation was by increasing their ability to pay their taxes; by expanding their trade—giving them an increased command of the materials of their manufactures, and an improved security of production, sale, and returns. In every direction, the agriculture, manufactures, and commerce of England were hampered by laws and arrangements which, originally intended for safeguards, had become restrictions. The food of the whole people was to be grown in their own island; and its supply was at the mercy of the weather, and of the changing state of men’s minds under the fluctuation of their fortunes: so that the prices of corn and other food, the rent of the rich and the loaf of the poor, rose and fell in extremes which destroyed all confidence and all regularity; whereas, if the world were laid open to the constant demand of the nations, the abundance of one region would supply the deficiency of another, and a natural balance would be established. As far as was possible, the same ancient plan was pursued with regard to the materials of manufactures. Instead of a liberty of purchase of hemp, silk, wool, timber, etc., where they could be had best, and when they were most wanted, all sorts of impediments were interposed in the way of obtaining supplies; and production was rendered difficult and

scanty in proportion. Instead of a liberty of sale of all productions, the producers were hampered by treaties and laws, the jealousies of governments, and the meddling of rulers, till the markets of the world were brought into an artificial state which discouraged enterprise and industry, by making them cost more, in money, risk, and anxiety, than they were worth. In truth, the methods which had been devised when states were young and half-peopled, and rulers were inexperienced, were now outgrown. They were applicable no longer; and now, when wars were over for the time, and countries were fully peopled, and inventions sprang up every day, and arts and economy improved from year to year, it was necessary that men should have more liberty to produce and to exchange. Society was now large, full, and busy enough to come under the great natural laws which regulate communities of men as infallibly as they regulate systems of worlds; it had outgrown the superintendence of a handful of managers who once thought it their business to dispense all its affairs according to their own notions. When Adams the mutineer found himself in command of the little company from the *Bounty*, and ruler of their island, he began with a sort of paternal rule. He dictated what clothes his subjects should wear, and how they should enclose their gardens, and how much land should be set apart for growing yams, and how much for maize; and he might even order this plant to be watered, and that to be sheltered, and another to be carefully reared in a seed-bed; but when his little company had spread out into a tribe, he could rule them no longer as a father, but as a legislator and judge. His business in his old age was to frame, with their concurrence, rules of behaviour, which he was to see enforced; but when he sat before his cottage on the knoll, and looked abroad over their harvests, spreading as far as he could see, and saw the people thronging in their market, and their boats going to and fro among the islands in the sea, he could no longer dream of such a task as regulating their households, and their fortunes. He must leave them to till their fields, and choose their fishing-grounds, and dye their webs, and sell their cargoes, in the way they might find answer best to them; certain that what

the country. There was nothing in this declaration which would have attracted much attention from any one else; for all the world knew that the existing cabinet were cordially united on only one great subject—opposition to parliamentary reform. But Mr. Canning's words were caught up as meaning that he considered the cause of the Catholics hopeless. The main error lay in concluding him to suppose that the question could not be carried but by the whole of an administration being agreed in its favour; whereas he declared, in the course of the explanation: 'I did not mean it; nor do I think such an administration necessary.' Under this supposition, and amidst the uneasiness felt in sympathy with the expectant Catholics, who had hoped much from Mr. Canning's accession to office, and in fear lest their patience should not hold out, nothing was more likely than that Mr. Canning should be at once condemned as having deserted the cause, and sacrificed the Catholics to his own ambition.

On the night of the 17th of April, the Catholic question was debated, on occasion of a petition in favour of their claims being sent up from fifty-five clergymen in the diocese of Norwich. During the accidental and short absence of Mr. Canning, Sir F. Burdett made a fierce attack upon him for his supposed defection; to which the accused replied on his return. Mr. Tierney followed in a speech which charged Mr. Canning with the ruin of the hopes of the Catholics, and with all the possible consequences of that ruin, from his having taken office without making the concession of the Catholic claims an absolute condition. Mr. Grey Bennet declared, that 'he now thought the affair was a perfect trick; or what, in familiar language, was called a humbug.' All this was somewhat trying to the nerves of a man singularly sensitive, in health far from robust, and in a state of anxiety, no less for a cause he had much at heart than for his own political honour. But there was more to come. Mr. Brougham followed with one of those violent accusatory speeches, charged with insult, which had in those days a power that we now find it difficult to understand—so enduring as censure is usually rendered by extravagance in the expression. It was too much for Mr. Canning. He sat in con-

strained stillness, while hearing of his 'monstrous truckling,' 'political tergiversation,' etc., his cheek flushing, his nostril quivering, his eyes almost glaring, till he interrupted his adversary by slowly rising, with his eye fixed upon him, and saying, with forced calmness: 'I rise to say that that is false.' There was a dead silence in the House for some seconds; and even the Speaker seems to have been taken by surprise. It was he who broke the silence by saying, in a low tone, that he hoped the right honourable secretary would retract the expression he had used, as one not permissible by the laws and customs of the House. Mr. Canning refused to retract 'the sentiment;' and Mr. Brougham to explain away his imputation. The matter was got rid of by an unusual stretch of the usual explanation in such cases; that the charge referred to the political and not the private character of Mr. Canning. On the face of it, this was absurd and untrue; but to such shifts were the opponents of Mr. Canning more than once reduced during these few latter years of his life, when he stood almost alone in the legislature and the cabinet, while supported with a growing enthusiasm by the people. This quarrel, so far transcending the ordinary squabbles in parliament, yielded some good results. It fixed universal attention on Mr. Canning's view of the present state of the Catholic question—that it rested securely on its own merits; and that unity of opinion in the existing cabinet about it was not necessary to its settlement.

A step was taken this session with regard to the punishment of death, which was of importance, in as far as it tended to separate the idea of death punishment from crimes which were no longer capital. The practice of passing sentence of death when every one knew it would not be executed, had long been found very demoralising; and the practice was now superseded by one not more defensible, but less offensive and pernicious. In convictions of felony short of murder, discretion was afforded to the judge to reserve the case avowedly for a commutation of punishment, by recording, instead of pronouncing, the sentence of death ordained by the law; such record having the same effect 'as if such judgment had actually been

orders for their emancipation had arrived from England, and that they were to be defrauded of it. In most slave regions, this would have led to a massacre of the whites; and it no doubt would here, but for the influence of a missionary of the Independents, to whom the Episcopalian clergyman of the colony ascribes the whole merit of the fact that not a drop of the blood of white men was shed. This missionary, John Smith, had been in the colony for seven years, during which time he had trained his flock to habits of order, industry, submission, and peace. Under his care, marriage became almost universal; and not one marriage in fifty was violated. There was an extraordinary deficiency of religious ministers in this colony; and that one man could have effected what Mr. Smith did, shows what may be done by the calm and steady zeal of one man, whose single object is the improvement and happiness of his neighbours. Just before the changes caused by the circular, the governor, whose object was to 'make head against the sectaries,' among whom he included all the religious bodies in the colony except the one Episcopalian flock—even the Dutch and Scotch churches, as well as the Methodist and Independent missionaries—had issued a prohibition to all the negroes to attend public worship, except by means of a pass from their owners; these owners being under no obligation to grant such a pass. When the slaves found themselves thus hindered in their worship, and believed themselves debarred from the liberty which the king had granted them, they rose upon their masters. They shed no blood; but they imprisoned the whites and put some in the stocks. The first who rose were some upon the east coast, who had suffered most by the deprivation of liberty to attend church, and they were joined by others who thought more of the other cause of complaint. The rising took place on the 18th of August. On the 19th, martial law was proclaimed. On the 20th, the insurrection was completely over. While no white was sacrificed, above two hundred negroes were killed and wounded in the first instance; forty-seven were executed; and the floggings of many more were worse than death—a thousand lashes being a frequent sentence. So much for the insurrection. It was Mr. Smith's story, in

connection with it, which makes this particular revolt conspicuous above others in the history of our time.

The governor kept the colony under martial law for five months after this insurrection of two days; and one of the persons brought to trial under this martial law was the missionary, Mr. Smith. Now was the time, during the reign of martial law, for 'making head against the sectaries.' The one Episcopalian clergyman, however, gave the governor no help in the valiant work. His testimony is all in favour of the 'sectary' under persecution. He declared his conviction, that 'nothing but those religious impressions which, under Providence, Mr. Smith has been instrumental in fixing—nothing but those principles of the gospel of peace which he has been proclaiming—could have prevented a dreadful effusion of blood here, and saved the lives of those very persons who are now, I shudder to write it, seeking his.' Under this reign of martial law, the pastor was kept in prison for two months before trial; in apartments—the one under the roof, exposed to burning heat—and the other on the ground, fetid from the stagnant water visible under the boards of the floor. He was an invalid before his arrest; and his death under these circumstances is not to be wondered at. The mode and conduct of the trial abounded in illegalities; and his conviction took place, on the evidence of three negroes, who afterwards confessed that they had been wrought upon to allege what was wholly false. The charges were, of having incited the slaves to revolt; of having concealed their intention to rise; and of having refused—which he did on the ground of ill health, and of his clerical office—to serve in the militia, several days after the suppression of the rebellion. But the real purpose of the trial is obvious, through all the ill-supported pretences put forward in the military court which assembled in the name of justice. 'No man,' declared Mr. Brougham in parliament, 'can cast his eye upon this trial without perceiving that it was intended to bring on an issue between the system of the slave-law and the instruction of the negroes.' This was, in truth, the cause in question; and John Smith was its martyr. The life of martyrs in a cause so vital and so comprehensive as this is rarely or never given in vain;

domination of their leaders, and the employers were harassed with vain attempts to execute orders which would have enriched them and their men together. Here a public edifice was left unfinished till the best weather for building was past; there, in the dyer's office, where the perfection of the black dye depended on a speedy use of a favourable state of the atmosphere, the goods were left in the vats exposed to the air for days, till they were spoiled. Elsewhere, the weaver who was willing to work for a twelfth hour in a busy time for increased wages, was met in the dark, and told that he would be murdered if he worked for more than eleven hours; and another found his clothes burned to rags with vitriol, for not having refused to work for an unpopular master; and some disappeared altogether—departed or murdered. There was something wrong here—that such troubles should exist amidst the general prosperity.

The new men ushered in by a new time took these mischiefs in hand. To consider the last-mentioned evils first—great changes were made this year in the laws respecting wages.

The Spitalfields journeymen were now well employed, and they were as careless about the passage of the bill proposed the preceding year as they had then been alarmed. It was not that they had grown wiser; for they did not yet perceive that a fixed legal rate of wages must have the effect of stopping the manufacture in unfavourable seasons, and of precluding their employers from competing with those of Macclesfield and Paisley, and other places where labour and its rewards were left free. They did not perceive how much of their business had been driven out of Middlesex by their Middlesex privileges; but the eleven thousand who had earnestly petitioned against change the year before, now let change take its course. They were fully employed during this season of prosperity, and supposed it would be always so; so they said nothing against the repeal of the Spitalfields Act, which took place very quietly this session. Lord Lauderdale introduced the matter in the Upper House where the change met with some opposition. In the Lower, no discussion took place at all. But for this proceeding,

there can be no doubt that the silk manufacture in Spitalfields would have been extinct before this time.

A committee of the House, with Mr. Hume for its chairman, reported upon the laws relating to artisans and machinery. Three points had been especially considered by this committee; the state of the combination laws; the question of permitting or prohibiting the emigration of artisans; and that of permitting or prohibiting the exportation of machinery. Of these three points, the last was left to stand over for future consideration. The report declared, with regard to the second point, that no laws could effectually prevent the emigration of artisans; that it was inexpedient to irritate the feelings of a valuable order of men by denying them the liberty of travelling which everybody else enjoyed, and interfering to prevent their carrying their labour to the best market; and that there was reason to believe that many valuable artisans who wished to return home remained abroad from a supposition that they were liable to punishment on their return. The total repeal of all laws affecting the freedom of travelling of artisans was therefore recommended. The recommendation was acted upon, and no opposition was made to this emancipation.

The third point was a very serious one; the consideration of the combination laws. The committee reported their conclusions—that these laws were instruments of oppression in the hands of employers, who had the means of putting them in force against their men, while no case was known to the committee of an employer being punished under them, even in the most flagrant cases of conspiracy against the interests of artisans. The report recommended that employers and their men should be left free, by a repeal of these laws, to manage their interests in their own way; and that that portion of the common law should be altered which treated as a conspiracy a peaceable meeting of masters and men. In the next session, Mr. Huskisson explained that some mistakes had been made in the proceedings which followed upon this report; that the bill founded upon the report had been framed and passed too hastily, and without due legal supervision. The bill repealed thirty or forty acts of parliament, and took away

where they were produced; but the immigrants obtained laws in their own favour, before the century was out, which shut out all foreign silks whatever. In 1719, the brothers Lombe set up a silk-mill—having learned, at great risk and expense, how the Italian silk-mills were constructed. The money they expended was under the security of the heavy duties which were laid upon the thrown silk imported from Italy; and when they had been repaid and rewarded by parliament, the expense of the establishment of silk-mills in England was the reason always brought forward for continuing the heavy duties on foreign thrown silk, when any one proposed to get it cheaper from Italy. This was very hurtful to the manufacture in England, both as regarded its extension and the improvement of its quality. It advanced very slowly—much more slowly than was natural—till the introduction of cotton fabrics into general wear, towards the end of the century, threw it back for some years. In 1793, four thousand looms stood idle which had given employment to ten thousand persons seven years before. When the manufacture revived, it was in consequence of the vast increase in the production of silk in India, where the Company had introduced the Italian method of preparing the material. The price per pound was not much lower than that of Italian silk, exclusive of duty; but in Italy only one crop of raw silk was produced in a year, while in India there were two or three. This abundance tended to remove those restrictions on manufacture which arise from scarcity of the raw material. Before 1770, only 100,000 pounds of silk were imported, whereas in 1823 the quantity amounted to 1,200,000 pounds of a much better quality. At that time, the value of the silk manufacture was estimated at ten millions; and it was believed to support about 400,000 persons. Yet our silks were higher priced than those of France, and generally considered not so good. It was the fashion among the ladies to prefer French silks; and so great was the encouragement given to smuggling through this fancy, that the English manufacturers found it answer well to send their fabrics to sea, to have them landed as smuggled goods; and the ladies were perfectly happy, as long as they knew nothing of the device, and could admire

inability to compete with the Swiss and French ribbon-weavers, when the fabrics of the latter should be introduced in July of the same year. He said: 'The superiority of the French and Swiss looms has been ascertained beyond all doubt. . . . Much has been done within the last two years in introducing improvements; and time and encouragement are alone wanting to give confidence for further application of capital to this most important object. One workman can produce, with the improved engine-loom lately adopted, six times the quantity of ribbon he could have before manufactured in his common single-hand loom; and it is a melancholy consideration, and one eminently deserving the serious attention of the House and his majesty's government, that fully three-fourths of the looms still in use in Coventry, to which place this manufacture is almost entirely confined, are of an inefficient description, and by far the greater part of them, the property, and it is sadly to be feared the only property, of the operative weavers themselves.'

These last considerations are very sad; and so they were felt to be by the House; but when it was proposed to decree protection to the Coventry weavers on these grounds, the House decided against it by a vote of 222 to 40 against the appointment of a committee to consider of it. It was clear that, instead of countenancing a preservation of the antiquated and bad methods of weaving ribbons by special protection, every facility should be afforded for improving the manufacture by competition with the most able foreigners. As it was clearly impossible to bring back the Swiss and French workmen to the use of expensive methods, and to prevent their command of the markets by their superiority, the only thing to be done was to emulate that superiority, so as to meet them fairly in the markets of the world. This method has completely answered in the case of all the other kinds of silk manufacture; and if the Coventry operatives continued to suffer after those of Macclesfield and Manchester had begun their new career of prosperity, it was not from the removal of protection, under which they had sunk to their impoverished state, but to their own deficiency of knowledge and skill. There was nothing in their isolated case

to shake the confidence of the minister when he said: 'Whether in a public station or in retirement, my greatest happiness will be to feel assured that the power and resources of this country have been increased by those measures of commercial policy which it has fallen to my lot to submit to parliament. That such will be their ultimate result is my firm and conscientious conviction.' Within three years of the utterance of these words, it was proved that the power and resources of the country had been increased by the doubling of the silk manufacture, and all the collateral advantages pertaining to such an increase. It was against this benefactor of his country, and all who acted upon his views, that a member of the House, on that same night, quoted, in his horror of 'theory,' the saying of Mr. Burke, that 'a perfect metaphysician, unbending and hard-hearted, exceeded the devil in point of malignity, and contempt for the welfare of mankind.' This is a striking lesson on the operation of prejudice; a subject on which there are few men who have not something to learn.

The case of the woollen manufacture, which received a similar boon this year, was somewhat different from that of silk. No duty was ever laid on wool till 1803; and then it amounted to little more than $\frac{1}{2}d.$ per lb. The duty never exceeded 1*d.* per lb. till 1819, when Mr. Vansittart most imprudently increased it to 6*d.* per lb. The trade had not been prosperous for some time before; and this increase of duty aggravated the mischief suddenly and greatly. The decline in the export of woollens in the very first year after the imposition of the duty was not less than one-fourth. It was to retrace the steps taken, to repair, if possible, the mischief done, that Mr. Huskisson now, after five years' trial of the augmented duty, reverted to the former plan. Foreign wool imported for English consumption, of the value of 1*s.* per lb. and upwards, was to pay a duty of 1*d.* per lb.; and wool of an inferior quality was to pay $\frac{1}{2}d.$ per lb. The novelty of the scheme was that English wool-growers were now permitted to export wool, on payment of a duty of 1*d.* per lb.

Before this time, the state of the case was this. The agriculturists would have liked that the manufacturers

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